ISSUES IN INDIAN POLITICS
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STUDY MATERIAL

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ISSUES IN INDIAN POLITICS

Module I: Socio Economic factors in Indian Politics
Caste, Religion & Class

Module II: Party System and Electoral Politics
Trends in the Party System; One Party Dominant System to Multi-Party Coalitions
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Module III: Secularism
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The uniqueness of Indian social structure lies in its unity and amidst diversity. It is a unique blend of religions, cultures and racial groups. Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Parsis are the major religious communities in India. There are 22 major languages, apart from numerous other languages and dialectics. The Indian society is divided into numerous castes and sub-castes, in spite of these diversities, still remains a largely unified society and political entity, governed under the Constitution.

CASTE

The system of caste has come to haunt both Indian Politics and Indian Political analysis. State Politics in India has been particularly the hot bed of Political Casteism. The word ‘Caste’ is derived from the Portuguese word ‘Casta’ meaning family, race, or lineage. The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology explains caste as ‘an institution of considerable internal complexity, which has been oversimplified by those seeking an ideal type of rigid hierarchical social stratification based on extreme closure criteria’. Caste in Indian society refers to a social group where membership is largely decided on the basis of birth. This caste comprises a local group whose members do not enter into marital relationship with outsiders. Originally this group was associated with a specific profession.
Caste always rests on differences determined at birth. These differences cannot be changed by individual achievements in the various fields like economic, professional or political. Scholars have different opinion about caste. Some have argued that the caste system is to be defined in terms of its Hindu attributes and rational and therefore, is unique to India. There are others opine that the caste system has to be defined in terms of structural features, which are found not only in Hindu India but in a number of other societies as well. The caste system very deeply entrenched in Indian society.

**Caste: Definitions**

- A.L. Kroeber defines Caste as “an endogamous and hereditary subdivision of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such sub-discussions”.
- F.G. Bailey says “a caste is a group of structural or potential kinsmen”
- M.N.Srinivas defines caste "as a hereditary endogamous, usually localised group, having a traditional association with an occupation and particular position in the hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed, among other things, by concepts of pollution and purity and generally maximum commensality occurs within the caste.
- According to Prof. Blunt, a caste is “an endogamous group, or collection of endogamous groups, bearing a common name, membership of which is hereditary; imposing on its members certain restrictions in matters of
social intercourse; either following a common traditional occupation or claiming a common origin, and generally regarded as forming a single homogeneous community.”

In Max Weber’s writings, it was synonymous with ethnic status stratification and constituted one end of the continuum which contrasted status honour stratification with commercial classes and the market.

Possibly, the clearest definition is that proffered by Andre Beteille, who describes a caste as ‘a small and named group of persons characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system, based on concepts of purity and pollution’.

Caste and Society

The groups constituting the caste system are differentiated, interacting and interdependent parts of a larger society. They are economically interdependent and occupationally specialized. In a caste system everyone belongs to a particular caste and no one belongs to a particular caste and no one belongs to more than one caste. A caste may comprise of people who follow different pursuits. The caste is always a purely social and possibly occupational association which forms part of a social community. The members of the caste view themselves and are viewed by others, as relatively homogeneous elements in a system of differentially ranked component parts rather than independent and mutually unranked and self-contained system.
Caste and Group

The members of caste usually share a group norm. They interact with one another in characteristic ways. There are identifiable symbols of group membership. These symbols range from skin colour to cultural features such as language, occupation, dress and place of residence. Only the members of the group are treated as peers. It is to be noted that where group affiliation is relevant, individual attributers are irrelevant.

Caste and Status Group

Membership in caste is determined by birth. An individual is assigned his lifelong and unalterable status according to his parentage. Status is shared by an individual with others of similar birth as per the status assigned to a particular Caste.

Caste and Clan

Caste resembles the clan in being a social unit within a larger political or cultural whole. Both are marriage regulated and hereditary from the point of view of the individual. However, it differs from the clan, as it is endogamous, whereas the clan is exogamous. The castes by very nature are ranked or rated, whereas clans are essentially equal in status within the society. The caste and clan represent the horizontal and vertical divisions of population, respectively.

Caste and Hierarchy

The caste system is hierarchical in nature. It implies a system of differentiated evaluation and enjoyment of differential power and rewards. It is, therefore, a system of
institutionalized inequality. Castes are ranked in terms of the shared “intrinsic worth”, which is ascribed by birth to the individuals who constitute them. This criterion of rank may be defined in many different idioms, such as purity, honour or genetically demanded capabilities. Those who are higher in the hierarchy regarded themselves as more worthy than those who in the lower ladder, does not ordinarily take place. If a system provides little or no opportunity for one to improve his position, it is called a caste or caste like system.

Caste and Sub-Caste

The 'sub-caste' is the predominantly endogamous unit. In some castes there are several hundred sub-castes. The sub-castes are either purely local castes or they constitute associations which are delimited and especially designated according to actual or alleged descent, former or present kind of occupational pursuit or other differences in style of life. They consider themselves as parts of the caste and, in addition to their own names, carry the name of the caste. These units are based on the local population within which there is an effective implementation of rules of the caste behaviour.

Origin of Caste System in India

It is believed that the caste system in India originated about 2,500 hundred years ago. It is prevalent not only among Hindus but also among Sikhs, Christians, and Muslims. While it has many aspects, here we are concerned with the aspect of hierarchy of high and low, of touchable and untouchable, which has provided legitimation for the unequal access to
resources, and to the exploitation and oppression of lower castes, besides the discrimination against lower caste by higher castes. The most crucial part of the caste system was that it designated certain groups as untouchables and out castes, and then used this to deny them ownership of land, entry into temples, access to common resources such as water from the village tank or well. Non-untouchable castes do not have any physical contact with untouchables. They could not accept water or food from their hands.

The classical example of the caste system is found in the ancient system of Hindu India. Scholars have assigned various origins to it. Some say it is the product of the culture conflict between the Aryans of the North and the people of the South, whom they invaded thousands years ago. To others, it was due to the differences in colour between the ‘lighter’ invaders and the ‘darker’ native population. One Hindu sociologist has rejected both these arguments pertaining to the origin of the caste. He claimed that the division of labour was the basis of origin of the Indian caste system.

The Indian caste system presents an extra ordinarily complex social phenomenon. Many of the social scientists have been interested in the caste system as a type of social stratification. It is in India that caste has its complete development. Indian caste system accordingly forms the most integrated as well as the most self-conscious system that has grown up anywhere in the world. By Buddha’s time, it was already fairly prevalent and the Greeks reported its existence a few centuries later. The Aryans a light skinned people
conquered the dark skinned Dravidians and imposed an unequal form of accommodation on them. Only the invaders monopolized to become priests, warriors and craftsmen, forcing the Dravidians into laboring jobs. It was this decision along racial lines that marked the beginning of the caste system. In fact, the Hindu word for caste, ‘Varna’ means ‘Colour’. Dark skinned people always pushed back to the bottom of society. They are treated very badly. Religion seems to have deeply influenced Hindu caste structure. Members of higher caste exploiting the lower caste peoples, they are known as untouchables.

The caste factor dominates Indian social and political life since earliest times caste has been one of the basic features of the structure of Indian society. So, caste influence is fairly strong in our country. M. N. Srinivas has rightly pointed out the development of telecommunication, spread of education, introduction of democratic institutions led not to the disintegration of caste system, but to its strengthening,

**Stratification based on Caste**

Caste in our society refers to a social group where membership is largely decided on the basis of birth. In India, caste is the central fact of social structure. It originally referred to the distraction between Arya and Dasa (Slave). The division in Indian society refers to the distinction between the original inhabitants (Dasa) and immigrant Arya population. At a later period there was the three fold and four fold division of society. The social stratification in Indian society commenced with this four- fold division. The names of those four are given
there as Brahmin, Rajanya (Kshatriya), Vaishya and Shudra, who are said to have come from the mouth, the arms, the thighs, and the feet of Creator. The four Varnas in which the Aryans divided the caste system - Brahmin (Priest), Kshatriya (Warrior), Vaishya (Merchant) and Shudra (Peasants), did correspond to the four functions of knowledge - defense, wealth and labour. This Varna scheme refers at the broad categories of the Hindu Society.

M.N. Srinivas writes “This Varna- scheme refers at the best only to the particular categories of the society and not to its real and affective units”. Each Varna includes within several castes. There are hundreds of caste groups in India and they are further subdivided. In 1901 about 800 castes and sub castes were listed. Later it was estimated that nearly 5000 castes and sub- castes could be distinguished. Accordingly, there are not four but thousands of castes of ‘Jatis’ in which the social system is organized. Duty of the upper caste Brahmins was to teach other castes. Next came the Kshatriyas who were protecting the society. They were followed by the Vaishyas, the merchants, the craftsman and farmers. The shudra’s were the hired labourers. Beneath them were the out castes or untouchables, who were not members of any of the four caste divisions and were outside the Hindu religion. They were assigned low occupations in the society. These people were forced to live on the outskirts of towns and villages. They were viewed as polluting food and water by their touch and who in some regions were not even permitted to approach the neighborhood of the high caste Hindus. The higher caste
people dominated every spheres of the society. There was also a deep rooted belief that the lower castes ‘contaminate’ the upper caste simply by touch or coming closer.

**Socio Reform Movements and their impact**

The caste system in India experienced many changes because of the changing socio-economic forces. In the caste system each caste was assigned one occupation. To perpetuate both the caste system and the economy in fact each caste would have to maintain itself in each generation through exact reproduction, and no more. But the birth rate in each caste and the demand for occupational skills of each caste never remained in perfect balance. The birth rate of various castes fluctuated from time to time and so did their occupational skills. Hence it paved the way for greater mobility in the context of social stratification. As a result of this various castes and sub-castes were grouped and regrouped.

Caste is a social custom, which all our great preachers and reformers have tried to abolish. From Buddhism, downwards, every religious sect has preached against the caste system. There were several socio-religious movements, which brought about many changes in the outlook towards a caste ridden society. The Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission movement and the Theosophical society etc, contributed towards this end. There were also protest movements led by Jyoti Rao Phule of Poona, the non-Brahmin movement in Madras led by EVR, the movement led by Sri Narayana Guru in Kerala and the movement led by Ambedkar to remove untouchability.
The movement, which was started by Mahatma Gandhi, was not only against the removal of untouchability but also against the caste system itself. From 1920 onwards, Gandhiji integrated the issue of abolition of untouchability into the national movement and major campaigns and struggles; such as the Vaikom (1924-25) and Guruvayur Satyagrahas (1931-32) were original in the post independence period there have been many attempts to break the hold of the caste system. The forces of urbanization and industrialization have also contributed substantially to undermine the caste system by facilitating closer contact and collaboration between different castes.

**Role of Caste in Indian Politics**

The relation between caste and politics may be analyzed at two levels: (i) how caste affects politics and (ii) how politics influences caste. The first aspect may be further examined at various levels in terms of interest of caste in politics; political knowledge and political awareness of castes; identification of castes with political parties; influence of castes on political affairs; actual participation of castes in politics, particularly with reference to effect of castes on voting behavior, emergence of elite on caste basis; and type of changes in political system as a result of involvement of caste organization, that is, how leadership gets a structural and ideological base for mobilization of masses and how concessions to local opinion are made. On the other hand, the effect of politics on caste maybe perceived as to how politics is used by a caste in rising social scale or achieving its goal. This
has been described as the processes of politicization of caste. Several castes have used politics in their attempt to better their condition or to achieve their goals. Use of politics or political means, according to Eleanor Zelliot, covers securing governmental benefits and representation on legislative and political bodies. Some examples which may be given in this connection are: Mahars of Maharashtra, Kshatriyas of Gujarat, Nadars of Tamil Nadu, and Reddys and Kammas of Andhra Pradesh and Ezhavas in the erst-while Travancore princely state in India.

Caste is a peculiarly Indian institution which has no counterpart elsewhere. Whether it had its beginning with Aryan invasions or earlier, caste has existed in India for centuries. M.N Srinivas has listed nine main features of the caste system; hierarchy, endogamy, and hypergamy, occupational associations, restrictions on food, drink and smoking, distinction in customs, dress and speech, pollution, ritual and other privileges and disabilities, caste organizations and caste mobility.

In the Hindu social system roles are ascribed and resistance to them was somewhat forbidden. As a result of this the state had a minimum role to play in the social sphere. In the course of time the traditional role experienced a change. In the changed scenario the caste came to play a different role. This had its manifestations in the information of pressure groups and political parties in India. New forms of caste groups have a new dimension. They have become highly competitive. This has resulted in a steady politicization of
Caste groups. According to Rajini Kothari “Caste has been politicized but in the process it has provided to Indian political process and symbols of political articulation”. The new situation arising out of caste conflict was the outcome of a power game in which ascending social groups, the shudras or backward caste groups sought to capture the level of power through the political process. The earlier belief that political power was the preserve of the upper castes received a severe jolt. The broad political scenario remains basically dominated by the numerically weaker upper caste groups because of their superior ritual status.

Under the impact of modern politics, associations of caste have become the hallmark of political mobilization. They have emerged with the object, of pursuing political power, social status and economic interest. Members of certain caste groups, who were considered low or the lowest in socio economic hierarchy a few decades ago, now federate together into a common organization and then press for their demands. They have grained new confidence and status. They not only actively participate in the political process but also assert their identity and even strive for positions. Thus politics become important for the caste and caste for politics.

Most of the people of India are illiterates. As these people could not understand politics in terms of class interests, they were wooed in the name of caste sentiments by various political parties. Caste considerations were given prime importance. The relationship between caste and politics has been of a dynamic type. It has by and large, been determined
by the factor of expediency and pragmatism. In other words, it changes with the rise and fall of new entrepreneurs and innovators of politics.

To sum up, caste occupies a very important place in the politics of our country at local and regional levels. It is traceable in various important events like situation of candidates for elective officers, formation of groups and factions. Canvassing campaigns, exercise of franchise, making of ministers, securing government favours and the like. It may now be concluded that in the present times, not only caste affects politics but by achieving the political power and caste solidarity, a caste succeeds in achieving a high social, economic and political position in the society. On the one hand, the involvement of caste organizations brings changes in the political system and on the other hand, the castes—even low in status—are enabled in pursuing their collective interests.

**Role of Caste in Elections**

- During elections the role of caste becomes very important.
- The selection of a candidate from a particular constituency is done keeping in view the caste considerations.
- The candidate should belong to the dominant caste or should be able to get support from a particular caste or castes.
- A candidate belongs to a caste, which has the majority in the area, has a fair chance of getting elected.
- People, also generality, tend to support the candidate of their respective caste.
As a result, the caste associations play a major role during the elections.

The political parties are associate-ridden.

Within a political party, alliances are formed on the basis of caste.

There has also been a case of one particular caste aligning with one party and other to other party.

For example, in Andhra Pradesh, there have been constant struggle between dominant castes of Kammas and Reddys. Both have been rival to each other.

RELIGION

The existence of religion in societies has been one of the most enduring phenomenons. Religion is certainly a matter of faith with individuals or communities. Religion has its basis in a system of beliefs or doctrines which are regarded by those, who profess that religion, are conductive to their spiritual wellbeing, but it would not be correct to say that religion is nothing else but a doctrine or belief. A religion may not only lay down a code of ethical rules for its followers to accept, it might prescribe rituals and observances, ceremonies and modes of worship which are regarded as integral part of religion and forms and observances might extend even to food and dress. The most well-known effective definition was proposed by a fundamental figure within modern protestant theology, Friedrich Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher stipulates that the “essence of religion consists in the feeling of absolute dependence”
Marxian view on Religion

In reviewing the development of the politics of Religion, it is necessary to review the contributions that stood outside the positivistic, evolutionary tradition. In his early works with Engels, Karl Marx (1818-1883) concentrated on the political aspects of religion and its use or abuse as a means of moral and intellectual repression. According to Marx, the discussion of labour in a capitalist society, the development of the structure of the market and the consequent exploitation of labour by subjugating humans to the products of their own labour, led to a condition of alienation of humans. Humans, who were unable to regulate their own world, turned to religion. This approach precisely shifted the focus to a more materialist, pragmatic critique of religion.

Marx observed that there is a parallel between religious and socio-economic activity. Marx and Engels saw religion as a social product, emerging out of social relations. Religion did not exist all by itself, independent of the social and economic forces. It became a means to control the masses and an instrument in legitimizing injustice.

Gandhi’s view on Religion

In Gandhi’s views all the great religions are fundamentally equal; the different religion are the windows through which God’s lights shines into man’s soul; the followers of different religion are partners in one spiritual quest. Although Gandhi derived his main inspiration from the Bhagavad Gita, he also used to read the Bible and the Quran. In Gandhi’s view the world as a whole contended that even if the whole community has one religion, there should be
no State religion. Gandhi was the advocate of religious tolerance.

**Major Religions in India**

India is a plural society. Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Parsis are the major religious communities in India. As per the religious census data of 2011, released by Registrar General and Census Commissioner, the total population in the country in 2011 was 121 crore. Hindu population is 96.63 crore (79.8 percent); Muslim 17.22 crore (14.2 percent); Christian 2.78 crore (2.3 percent); Sikh 2.08 crore (1.17 percent); Buddhist 0.84 crore (0.7 percent); Jain 0.45 crore (0.4 percent), other religions and persuasions (ORP) 0.79 crore (0.7 percent); and religion not stated 0.29 crore (0.2 percent). The proportion of Muslim population to total population has increased by 0.8 percentage point (PP) in 2011, the census data said. The proportion of Hindu population to total population in 2011 has declined by 0.7 (PP); the proportion of Sikh population has declined by 0.2 (PP) and the Buddhist population has declined by 0.1 (PP) during the decade 2001-2011. There has been no significant change in the proportion of Christians and Jains.

**Religious Protection in India**

The concept of religious freedom embodied in the Indian Constitution. Freedom of religion is a fundamental right guaranteed by Article 25-28 of the Constitution of India. Being a secular country India does not have its own religion and every citizen has the right to choose, practice, propagate and even change his or her religion. However, these rights are not absolute but subject to certain restrictions provided by the constitution. Besides by interpreting the constitutional provisions for religious freedom, the judiciary plays an important role in
determining the extent to which the state can lawfully regulate religious affairs.

CLASS

The term ‘class’ is an ambiguous term. It has been used very loosely in everyday parlance. In recent times there have been many new concepts introduced to social sciences. The concept of class is one of them. Karl Marx used this concept in his analysis of social relations. After him it becomes almost a fashion in contemporary thinking about society to think in terms of class and not in terms of the individuals. The economist has also been inclined to analyze in terms of classes. Psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists have frequently used the concept of class in the field of social differentiation of groups. In ancient times social differentiation was not based on class but on status or rank. The differentiation according to status was fixed. An individual was born into a certain status; his or her membership in it was determined by law and custom. A change of status was practically out of question.

In common use the term ‘class’ is used in a varied sense. People are usually classified into upper, middle, and lower classes. Classes may be decided in terms of propertied and non-propertied or producing and non-producing classes. In a general sense, therefore, the term class refers to a group of people living certain characteristics in common. Communities are socially stratified in various ways, but the main type of social stratification, especially in the more developed societies is based on class. A ‘class’ may mean any category or type within which individuals, as units are included. The various
occupations make vertical decisions of the community. The decision that reflects the principal of social class exists whenever social interaction is limited by consideration of status i.e., in terms of distinction between ‘higher’ or ‘lower’.

**Definition of Class**

Different authors in various ways have defined the term ‘class’

- Class has been defined as ‘A number of people having in common a specific casual component of their life chances, in so far as this component is represented by economic interest in the possession of goods and opportunities for income and is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labour markets’.

- Max Weber defined class ‘As aggregates of individuals who have the same opportunities of acquiring goods and the same exhibited standard of living’.

- Morris Ginsberg says, ‘Class in modern society may be described as groups of individuals who, through common descent, similarity of occupation, wealth and education, have come to have a similar mode of life, a similar stock of ideas, feelings, attitudes and forms of behavior and who, on any or all these grounds, meet one another on equal terms and regard themselves, although with varying degrees of explicitness, as belong to one group.’

- The Marxist definition of class refers to ‘Any aggregate of persons who play the same part in the production mechanism’.
Historical Perspective

Various theorists have analyzed the essential nature of class and its attitudes, keeping in mind the different periods in history. In its historical perspective, essential changes have taken place in the very nature of classes. In the communities, which are not closed societies with caste system, certain individuals were often exempted from the bounds of community because of acquisition of wealth. The display of craftsmanship, hereditary autocracies and priesthood, were also factors, which contributed to distinguish these categories from others in the community. Social mobility, however, was limited in these communities.

There are some scholars who believed that the transition from a society of status to one of class occurred in Greece during the 6th and 7th century B.C. and in Rome somewhat later. The first class conflict in Greece arose from opposition to the landed aristocracy. The peasantry, heavily in debt during the autocracy, brought about colonial legislation for the extension of political rights to citizens. Formal freedom and equality allowed genuine classes to be formed through operation of economic factors.

It was at the beginning of the 19th century that changes in distribution of wealth exercised considerable influence upon social stratification and social mobility. The development of capitalism, the growth of large scale industry and advance in science and technology contributed significantly in determining the class composition and also the possession of property was the main yardstick to determine the class. The
advent of socialism, however, was a source of encouragement to the working class to assert itself in the social hierarchy.

**Approaches to the Study of Class**

There are many approaches pertaining to the study of class. In the first place, when history has been written in terms of the rise and fall of social classes, class has been viewed in strictly economic terms. Karl Marx is highly associated with this approach. Secondly, social class has also been analyzed utilizing the statistical index. Income levels and occupational classification have been frequently used to distinguish the classes. Thirdly, the criteria of social acceptance and the number of local social classes have been taken into consideration while distinguishing classes. A number of sociologists have described class structures of local community primarily by securing the opinions of local residents. The views of different sociologist are to be examined to bring out the meaning of class and its different dimensions. The writers, on the question of what is the concept of social class, fall broadly in to two groups. There are some who subscribe to the view that objective factors must have to be emphasized. They include the ownership or non-ownership of means of production- a concept, which is essentially Marxian. There are others who have emphasized upon the general standard of living, holding the view that in modern society it is a basis of vital importance on which a class is built. Weber for example, builds his analysis on the possession of economic means, eternal standard of living and cultural and recreational possibilities.
Marxian Perspective on Class

It was Karl Marx who carried the scientific perspective into the study of social class. He derived his ideas of class from what he called “the scientific laws of history”. He made an attempt to discover the underlying forces behind the origin of class. He is acknowledged as the pioneer of the study of social class. He made class as the central aspect of his analysis of society. The Marxist formulation as laid down in the chapter ‘Social classes’ in ‘Capital’, includes three major economic classes in modern society: land lords receiving rent, capitalist receiving profits and workers receiving wages. Economist like Ricardo influenced this analysis. The Marxist Sociology starts from the premise that the primary function of social organization is the satisfaction of the basic human needs. Marx considered distribution as a dependent function of production. Hence, primacy of production is the basic assumption in the Marxist definition of class. The three classes were differentiated in accordance with their relation to the means of production;

1. Capitalists or owners of means of production.
2. Workers, or all those who employed by others.
3. Landlords, who differ from the capitalist and they are regarded as survivors of feudalism.

He further elaborated the differentiation within each of these basic categories. The three great social groups lived on profit, wages, and rent through utilization of their capital and their private land respectively. Marx perceived the small
businessman, or petty bourgeoisie as a transitional class. He made an objective analysis of different classes.

The primary interest of Karl Marx was to understand and facilitate the emergence of class consciousness among the depressed people. He was optimistic about the emergence of a sense of identical class interest as a basis for conflict with the dominant class. Marx recognized the difference between class and class-consciousness, but thought that one would inevitably come to reflect the other. The history of mankind has been a continuous struggle of classes. The modern capitalist system does not abolish the class struggle, it nearly creates new classes and simplifies and intensifies the struggle between them. Under capitalism the people are divided into hostile camps, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. While the bourgeoisie concentrates on converting surplus value into profit, the proletariat tries to resist this attempt. In this struggle the workers realize that the power of the bourgeoisie rest upon the ownership of means of production. They also realize that the economic exploitation can be ended only through the establishment of a socialist society based on collective ownership. The Communist Manifesto jointly written by Marx and Engles asserted that “The history of hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles”. The materialistic interpretation of history and the theory of class struggle are significant contributions of Karl Marx to sociological analysis.

There are many critics who oppose the Marxian approach. Many sociologists did not agree with the emphasis on production. They, on the other hand, gave more stress on the
distribution system. Sociologists have pointed out that Marxian analysis of class is sociologically inadequate.

**Max Weber’s Class Model**

Max Weber, a German sociologist had somewhat different definition of class, though it was not a complete departure from the Marxian approach. While Marx placed exclusive emphasis on economic factors as determinants of social class, Weber suggested that economic interest should be seen as a special case of the larger categories of ‘values’. These values included many things that are neither economic nor interests in the ordinary sense of the term. Though Weber considered the Marxist model as a source of meaningful hypothesis, he viewed it as too simple to handle the complex problem of social analysis. Weber held that class could be defined on exclusively economic or market terms. Here there is no disagreement between his approach and that of the Marxian approach. Weber, however, carefully distinguished class defined in terms of economic factors and other related factors.

The term class refers to any group of people that is found in the same class situation. Weber reserved the concept of class for economically determined stratification of the society. He defined a class as being composed of people who have live chances in common, as determined by their power to dispose of goods and skills for the sake of income. He considered property as class assets, but did not consider it as the only criterion of class. Weber argued that the social and economic order is merely the way in which economic goods and services are distributed and used. The social order is of course
conditioned by the economic order to a greater extent, and in its turn reacts upon it.

The other dimension, which Weber did emphasize, was ‘status’. It refers to the quality of perceived interaction. Weber defines it as the positive or negative estimation of honour, or prestige, received by individuals. Status involves perception of how an individual is valued by others. Men, therefore, give more values to status than to economic gain. Weber regarded economic class as important primarily because it is perceived as a cause of status. Status refers to factors such as family origin, manners, education and the like.

Marxian analysis sees power as being derived from class position. The phenomenon of power in Weberian model is a complex one. Weber defined power as the chance of a man and or group to realize their will even against the opposition of others. He saw the key source of power in modern society not in the ownership of means of production but in the vast bureaucracies. An analysis of Weberian model suggests that he raised the Marxian ideas about the nature and consequences of social stratification, to a higher degree of generalization. While Marx mainly concentrated his study of social relations under capitalism and derived conclusions based on that, Weber characterized every complex society according to the distribution of economic and honorific life chances in it.

CLASS AND CASTE

In the Indian context, the two terms - caste and class become very confusing and sometimes, their use overlaps each other. Class refers to a hierarchical position in the social order
and differential distribution of prestige based on that position. It refers to one form of stratification by contrast to another major form, usually referred to as ‘caste’. In a class system, several social classes are present in the society. A social class consists of a category of people who share similar opportunities, similar economic and vocational positions, similar life styles and similar behavior. A class system usually results from industrialization and is present in all industrial societies. Class implies mobility i.e. the possibility of movement up and down the social scale. Caste implies a hereditary relationship. There is a rigid from of social stratification based on ascribed characteristics. People are born into and spend their entire lives in a caste with little chance of leaving it. There is ample display of superior inferior status of participants.

**Comparison of Caste and Class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASTE</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The caste system is an Indian peculiarity and uniqueness.</td>
<td>• The class system is prevalent in all modern societies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collectivity is taken as a unit in the caste system.</td>
<td>• Individuals are taken as units in the class system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The provision of caste councils or panchayats is found in the caste system for regulating the caste affairs.</td>
<td>• The class system does not provide a council to regulate affairs pertaining to a class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Caste vs. Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASTE</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Rules regarding commensality are strictly enforced in the caste system.</td>
<td>• The class system has no rules regarding commensality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There are a number of castes and sub castes. There are also regional variations.</td>
<td>• The class division is a simple phenomenon and it is widely held that there are only three classes, the higher, the middle and the lower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is based on the religious order and people accept their fate due to their belief in the doctrine of Varna.</td>
<td>• The class system cuts across the religious barriers and can embrace members from all faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Caste is a very parochial concept and it is difficult to leave one’s own caste.</td>
<td>• Class is a broad concept and one changes his class at birth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mutual cooperation, interdependence and collective sentiments from the basis of the caste system.</td>
<td>• The class system is marked by individualism and competitive outlook of the members.</td>
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</table>
PARTY SYSTEM IN INDIA

Political scientists throughout the world are divided in their opinions on the importance of parties in a democracy, but the fact remains that the parties do exist and play vital roles in all modern democratic States and indeed in most States, whatever their ideological orientation. If India is to survive as a moving generally in the democratic direction, it must evolve a healthier party system or develop some effective alternatives to parties.

Almost all modern societies, democratic or totalitarian, developed or modernizing, large or small have some sort of party system. Though the written Constitution of India, like many other written Constitutions of the world, does not acknowledge the existence of political parties, yet they are central to our political process. They are both inevitable and necessary. They are inevitable because they are the only means whereby power can be obtained and exercised in an organized way. They are necessary because they form a bridge between the government and the governed which gives meaning to representative system.

Political parties are indispensable link between society and the government. In all modern democratic systems,
political parties play a decisive role. However, in the third world countries, except India, free competition for popular support between different parties is rare. In India, after six decades of representative government and general elections, it has maintained a parliamentary system based on competitive and free elections. In a political system, parties act as the carrier of ideas, opinions and approaches to social needs and national goals. Parties provide a link between the citizens and the government, between the electorate and the representative institutions. In fact a successful democracy requires a healthy party-system for its existence. Political parties are instruments through which citizens choose those who constitute the government. They explain merits and dangers of alternate policies and provide political education to the citizens. Political parties are extra constitutional institutions which are crucial in running democratic government of a country. They are essential for the proper functioning of different types of democratic governments. The successful democratic functioning of any government depends upon the healthy political party system.

According to Finer, political parties are “Organized bodies with voluntary membership, their concentrated energy being employed in the pursuit of political power”. In a democratic political system the most important institution is the political party. Between the social and political systems a sub-system is being provided by political parties. The strength of political party cannot be determined by its electoral performance alone. The status of members, the assimilative capacity of its
ideology, its strength in the trade union field, the capacity for propaganda, influence over the key centers of the economy, the capacity for neutralizing the electoral strength of the other parties, etc. may be reckoned as the potential though not manifest strength of a political party.

**Meaning and Role of Political Parties**

Human beings have always organised themselves in groups and larger formations. Political parties have emerged as one of these human organisations. In modern age the ideal form of government is run through one or the other method of representative institutions. All representative governments and representative institutions require the existence of political parties. A political party is an organised body of people who share certain common principles and goals regarding the political system of a country. The main purpose of political parties is to acquire and retain political power. Political parties which run the government are called the ruling party. In a coalition government, there may be more than one ruling party. Those who sit in the opposition and criticize and analyse the performance of the ruling party/parties generally or on specific issues are called opposition parties. A political party as such should have the following essential features:

i) It must be an organised body of people with a formal membership;

ii) It must have clearly spelt out policies and programmes;

iii) Its members should agree with its ideology, policies and programmes;
iv) It must aim at getting power through the democratic process;
v) It must have a clear and acceptable leadership; and
vi) It must focus on broad issues and major areas of government policies.

Evolution and Nature of Indian Party System

In every State, party system is the product of its historical evolution, civic tradition, cultural orientation and economy. In India the nature of party system is based on the nature of state diversities of regional cultures, wide geographic area demands of social change and economic development.

In India party system originated in the late 19th century as a response to the British colonial rule. During this period the party system represented an assertion of national solidarity for national liberation and a vision for new India. The beginning of the Indian party system can be traced to the formation of the Indian National Congress as a political platform in 1885. Later various other parties were formed. The policy of divide and rule and the introduction of separate communal electorate led to the formation of the communal and caste based parties like Hindu Mahasabha, Muslim League, Akali Dal, etc.

The political parties everywhere endeavor to replace the traditional power structure. In Kerala and, as a matter of fact in the whole of India, the traditional power structure was threatened with demolition by five factors- the nationalist movement, adult franchise, land reforms, trade unionism and political parties. The nationalist movement sought to unify
society and promised the introduction of adult franchise at the down of independence. Land reforms and trade unionism radically altered the relations between individuals, groups and more than anything between the owner of the means of production and the worker. The political parties by the maintenance of discipline and the possession of the capacity for the distribution of favour made onslaughts on the traditional power structure. The successful democratic functioning of any government depends upon the healthy political party system. Bryce has remarked that “political parties are inevitable” for the successful working of democracy.

**Main Features of Indian Party System**

Indian party system is different from the party system in the western democracies. Some critics say that India has parties, but no party system. They argued that there are many political parties, big and small in the country. At the same time there is nothing like emotional or psychological attachment of the people to a particular party or parties. Main features of the Indian party system are the following:

**1. One Dominant Party System:**

India in the words of Morris Jones, is not a ‘one party state’ but it is a ‘one dominant party system’, since independence a large number of parties came into being, but the Congress has managed to retain a dominant position. The Indian National Congress enjoyed wide popular support all over the country till 1967 election. It was the ruling party at the
Towards the last decade of both centuries, Indian party system took a new turn with a multi-party system dominated by the regional parties.

Even after the split of 1969, the Congress under the leadership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, managed to maintain its dominant position at the Centre as well as in most of the states. In the 1971 election to the Lok Sabha Mrs. Gandhi swept the polls and the Congress returned to power with a three-fourth majority. An extra constitutional centre of power was created under the leadership of her younger son - Sanjay Gandhi. This character of the Congress party led to the declaration of internal emergency in 1975.

Another election was held in March 1977, which led to the defeat of the Congress. With the disintegration of the Janata Party in 1979, Mrs. Indira Gandhi again came to power in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections. In 1984 Rajiv Gandhi came to power as a result of the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi. In the 1989 election, the National Front under the prime ministership of Sri. V.P. Singh came to power by defeating the Congress under Rajiv Gandhi. The Congress under the leadership of Prime Minister P.V NarasinhaRao came to power as a result of 1991 elections. In 1996 election United Front under the leadership of Deva Gowda and later I.K Gujral came into power at the Centre. The eleventh Lok Sabha came to an end in December 1997. In the 1998 and 1999 Lok Sabha elections no single party got majority. A United Front under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee formed the government
with the support of number of parties. Since 1998 Indian party system became a multi-party system with coalition government.

2. **Mushroom growth of Political Parties.**

There has been a mushroom growth of national, regional, communal and personalist political parties in India. No other democratic country has such a multiplicity of parties. Most of them came into existence after the disintegration of the Janata Party in 1979. Now, The Congress (I), the Communist Party of India (CPI), The Communist Party of India (Marxist), Bharatiya Janata Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Nationalist Congress Party, All India Trinamool Congress and National People’s Party are the parties which have national significance. In India, the law does not regulate the formation and functioning of political parties most of the political parties have no mass base.

3. **Regional Political Parties**

Another feature of the Indian party system is that each state has its own political parties. Most of these regional parties have no ideological commitments. They represent the interest of particular linguistic, religious, regional, ethnic and caste or cultural groups. Some of them are communal in character, others are openly separatist.

Most important regional parties are National Conference in Jammu & Kashmir, DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, Akali Dal in Punjab, Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala Congress and Muslim League in Kerala etc.
4. **Role of Caste and Communal Parties**

Caste and community play an important role in the working of the Indian party system. Some parties are openly communal in character. The other parties which claim to be secular are not free from Caste and communal considerations. Every party chooses its candidates according to the Caste and communal composition of the constituency. Every appeal to the voters as well as selection of ministers is on Caste on communal basis.

5. **Lack of Ideological Commitment**

Ideology is considered to be the core of a political party. It is necessary for mobilizing its organization and to motivate its members. Despite functioning on the basis of ideological commitment, almost all political parties in India have stood to capture power to get power; the parties are ready even to sacrifice their ideology. Every party swears by Gandhism, democracy, socialism and secularism. Every so called secular parties join hands with communal or caste parties in the formation of governments. In 1977, Jana Sangh was a constituent of the Janata party supported by communist parties, Muslim League and so on.

6. **Role of Individuals**

Certain individuals of personalities dominated Indian parties. The leader of the party is often elected by its members but once elected the party functions according to the wishes and fancies of the leader. Some of the parties bear the name of their leader. For example, Congress [I] ,Congress [S], Lok Dal[A], Lok Dal[B] , Kerala Congress[M][J] and so on.
7. **Defection**

Defection is a pervasive feature of Indian Party System. When India became independent there were two major parties only, Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India. They were organizationally well built and commanded loyalty of their members. Today there is no such thing as party loyalty. Political defection has ruined the Congress and all other party that came into existence after independence. This epidemic led to the passing of the anti-defection Act 1985.

8. **Organisational Drawbacks**

Except the communist parties and the BJP no party in India can claim some sort of party organization. Other parties are mere crowds without definite membership, organization or discipline. Most parties maintain no membership registers, keep no accounts and hold no organizational elections. The office bearers of these parties are either self-appointed or nominated by top leaders.

9. **Fragmented opposition**

The opposition in India is unable to constitute an alternative to the ruling party. They have neither been able to a strong opposition nor have they succeeded in creating a United Front in 1977, for the first time the Janata constituted by a member of parties came to power but within two years it failed and disintegrated. Even today the opposition is not in a position to form a United Front because of the selfish style and interest of some leaders.
National Political Parties

In India political parties are broadly divided into All India parties and Regional parties. All India parties are national parties. National parties receive their support from various segments of society. They put up their candidates for the Lok Sabha election across state lines. Now, there were eight National Parties and 48 State Parties, recognised by the Election Commission. The Congress (I), the Communist Party of India (CPI), The Communist Party of India (Marxist), Bharatiya Janata Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Nationalist Congress Party, All India Trinamool Congress and National People’s Party are major recognised national parties.

1. Indian National Congress

INC, also commonly called the Congress is one of the two major contemporary political parties in India, the other being the Bharatiya Janata Party. It is one of the largest and oldest democratically-operating political parties in the world. The organisation was founded during the British Colonial times in 1885.

The founders included a prominent member of the Theosophical Society, Allan Octavian Hume, Dadabhai Naoroji and Dinshaw Wacha. In the following decades, the Indian National Congress became a pivotal participant in the Indian Independence Movement, with over 15 million members and over 70 million participants in its struggle against British colonial rule in India. After independence in 1947, it became the nation's dominant political party; in the 15
general elections since independence, the Congress has won an outright majority on six occasions, and has led the ruling coalition a further four times, heading the central government for a total of 49 years. There have been seven Congress Prime Ministers, the first being Jawaharlal Nehru, serving from 1947–64 and the most recent being Manmohan Singh, serving from 2004-14. The party's social liberal platform is largely considered to be on the centre-left of the Indian political spectrum.

The Indian National Congress was established on 27th December 1885 in Bombay. The party has succeeded in creating a broad and powerful anti-imperialist movement consisting of different classes of people. The Indian National Congress, which led the freedom struggle, was more in the nature of a mass movement than a political party. The Congress represents all classes and communities in our society. It also represents different ideological viewpoints. Indian National Congress was elitist in character. The Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji was converted into a mass movement from an elite party. Under Gandhiji, the Congress acquired an organizational structure, which reflects the village society of India. The Congress acquired experience in running provincial governments under the scheme of provincial autonomy during 1937-1939. This experience enabled the party to handle political power, as a ruling party, in the Independent India. After Independence, the Indian National Congress as the ruling party, further consolidated and expanded its support base. It increased its support from the
rural people and among peasants.

After the death of Pandit Nehru in 1964 until the split in 1969, the Congress was in a crisis in both ideological and organisational terms. This was due to the failure of the Congress in the 1967 General Elections. In the 1967 election the Congress returned to power at the Centre at the same time it lost control over six States.

The split of 1969 resulted in the formation of two parties, the Congress (I) and Congress (0). In the 1971 General Election the Congress (I), under the leadership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi swept the Loksabha elections. In 1972 Assembly Election, the Congress (I) captured most of the States. This revealed that the Congress (I) led by Mrs. Gandhi was the successor of the Indian National Congress. The election results of 1971 and 72 made Mrs. Gandhi arch leader of the Congress (I) and gradually the party was converted into a political organisation of the Supreme Leader. This was followed by the growth of some extra-constitutional centre of power created by Sanjay Gandhi. Centralisation of power and self-style leadership of the Congress led to declaration of Internal Emergency in 1975. During the period of emergency the Congress became highly unpopular.

In the 1977 election to the Loksabha the Congress for the first time in history, was defeated and Janata Party came to power. In 1977 LokSabha election even Indira Gandhi lost her seat in home constituency. This resulted in a split within the party, leading to the emergence of the Congress (I). Many of the old and experienced leaders left the party, blaming her for
its humiliating defeat in the elections. As a result the new party-Congress (Indira) became completely identified with her personality. Many of the party's top decision-making agencies, such as the Congress Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee lost their powers. Similarly, state party organisations were also brought under her direct control. She built a pyramid like organization that was run by her or her henchmen. Under Indira's leadership the Congress Party simply became an instrument of personal power. She also sought to use the organisation for dynastic succession. First she groomed Sanjay, her younger son, to take over the leadership of the party, but after his accidental death in June 1980, she brought in her elder son, Rajiv.

**Ideology and policy positions**

Since the 1950s, the INC has favoured liberal positions (the term "liberal" in this sense describes modern liberalism, not classical liberalism) with support for social justice and a mixed. INC strongly supports Liberal nationalism, a kind of nationalism compatible with values of freedom, tolerance, equality, and individual rights. Historically, the party has favoured farmers, labourers, labour unions, and religious and ethnic minorities. It has opposed unregulated business and finance. In recent decades, the party has adopted a centrist economic and socially progressive agenda and has begun to advocate for more social justice, affirmative action, a balanced budget, and a market. The economic policy adopted by the modern INC is free market policies, though at the same time it is in favour of taking a cautious approach when it
comes to liberalising the economy claiming it is to help ensure that the weaker sectors are not affected too hard by the changes that come with liberalisation. In the 1990s, however, it endorsed market reforms, including privatisation and the deregulation of the economy. It also has supported secular policies that encourage equal rights for all citizens, including those in lower castes.

The party supports the somewhat controversial concept of family planning with birth control. Throughout much of the Cold War period, the Congress Party championed a foreign policy of nonalignment, which called for India to form ties with both the West and communist countries but to avoid formal alliances with either. Nonetheless, American support for Pakistan led the party to endorse a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union in 1971. In recent decades, the party began advocating welfare spending programs targeted at the poor. In 2004, when the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) came to power, its chairperson Sonia Gandhi unexpectedly relinquished the premiership to Manmohan Singh. This Singh-led "UPA I" government executed several key legislations and projects, including the Rural Health Mission, Unique Identification Authority, the Rural Employment Guarantee scheme and the Right to Information Act.

2. The Communist Party of India (CPI)

The Communist Party of India (CPI) was formed in December 26, 1926. It remained an illegal organisation until 1942 when the British accepted its support for the Allied War
effort. After 1947 there were a number of changes in the party tactics and the period was marked by the splits. The first split in 1964 coincided with the schism in international communism and the new party came into being namely Communist Party of India (Marxist). The Party again subjected to a split and Maoist Communist Party was formed on April 22, 1969, which was Lenin's 100th birthday. It styled itself as the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) and claimed Mao as its guide.

In 1949 the Party turned to terrorism, sabotage and strikes. In 1948, P.C. Joshi was replaced as general secretary by B.T. Ranadive, with the advancement of more militant 'left' line. Ranadive emphasised the working class as the instrument of revolution and discounted the peasant uprising in the Telengana region of Hyderabad. During this period Nehru was denounced as a 'running dog of imperialism' and the Congress, in both its foreign and its domestic policy, as the reactionary captive of capitalist and landlord elements. But with the new political leadership in the Soviet Union and the ongoing process of de-Stalinization under Khrushchev, the Soviets decided to befriend the Nehru government.

This change in Soviet foreign policy forced the CPI to alter its course of action. The CPI was officially advised to abandon its adventurist tactics. The policy shift was welcomed by those within the party notably PC. Joshi, S.A. Dange and Ajoy Ghosh, who favoured participation in the forthcoming elections. In 1951, the revisionist line won out, with the selection of Ajoy Ghosh as General Secretary of the Party. Ghosh, from a centrist position, led the party toward...
'constitutional communism'. The CPI supported Indian foreign policy and extended its full support to all progressive policies and measures of the government. In 1958, the CPI adopted the Amritsar Resolution and pledged to seek power and social change through parliamentary means. The dominant faction within the party supported Nehru's 'progressive' policies, especially his foreign policy. During the 1969 split in the Congress Party, and later during the national emergency, the CPI consistently supported Indira Gandhi and her government.

The CPI membership is concentrated in four States: Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and West Bengal. Three other States have significant enrolments: Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Punjab. In the CPI, the workers and wage-earners constituted 17 per cent of the Party membership. The 1982 report of the Party says that agricultural workers constitute a sizeable section of the Party membership and in some States account for more than 50 per cent of the membership. The Party is also entrusted with the task of building mass organisations, particularly trade unions, Kisan Sabhas and agricultural worker's associations.

**Ideology and Programme**

It is committed to moderate programme of parliamentary socialism and to responsive co-operation with the Congress. Its leadership aims at building a ‘national democratic state’ in which the political power is wielded by a coalition of progressive democratic forces including Communists. The party stands to ending indifference to the welfare of the working class, agricultural labour, Scheduled Castes and
Scheduled tribes. It aims at generating more jobs, implementing radical land reforms, reducing foreign debt by restricting imports, reversing the trend of handling over public sector units to private industrialists and above all, arresting the steep rise in prices.

The CPI favours co-operation with all democratic and progressive forces including 'the centre' and 'the left' of the Congress Party. They hope to enlarge the party's parliamentary strength through electoral Pacts with the like-minded parties like BSP, SP, RJD and Congress.

**Electoral Performance**

In the first general election, next to the Congress the CPI secured the largest number of Assembly seats winning 198 seats of the 587 it contested. The Party had notable success in Travancore-Cochin, Madras, Hyderabad, Tripura and West Bengal. The Party was itself more than satisfied. The results of the second general election were even more encouraging to the Party. In these elections it emerged as the second largest party in the country, not merely in terms of seats won but also in terms of votes polled. The party captured majority in Kerala in 1957 and formed the first-democratically elected Communist government under E.M.S. Namboodiripad. The Party became the main opposition group in both houses of Parliament with 27 seats in the Lok Sabha. In the words of Professor Rasheeduddin Khan, "The communists were the main opposition in the Lok Sabha throughout the Nehru era. In the first Lok Sabha with 16 members, in the second and the third Lok Sabha with 27 and 29 members respectively. A turning
point in the history of the CPI came when in 1957 they won an absolute majority in the Kerala Assembly and formed the first communist government in India." The party retained the position as the largest opposition group in the Lok Sabha after fourth general elections in 1967. In 1971 it secured 23 seats. In 1977 it secured only 7 seats. In 1980, the CPI could manage to increase its winning tally to 11 seats. In 1984, the CPI has won only 6 seats of the Lok Sabha. In the 1989 Lok Sabha elections the party won 12 seats, while in tenth Lok Sabha elections (1991) the Party won 14 seats. In 1996 elections for 11th Lok Sabha the Party has a share of 12 seats, in the 1998 Lok Sabha elections, the CPI obtained 9 seats and 4 seats in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections.

3. The Communist Party of India (Marxist)

A split in the Communist Party of India in 1964, led to the formation of India's second Communist Party called the Communist Party of India (Marxist). In early 1962, in the wake of the Chinese invasion of Indian territory, as criticism of the CPI mounted, the National Council resolved to condemn the Chinese action as 'agression' and to call upon the Indian people to 'unite in defense of the motherland'. In protest the leftists resigned from the party secretariat and even Namboodiripad submitted his resignation as general secretary of the party. At the National Council meeting in 1964 the left attempted, without success, to oust party chairman Dange. They came armed with a letter written by Dange in 1964, in which he had offered to co-operate with the British in exchange for his release from jail. Denouncing the letter as a
forgery the Council refused to consider the charges. The left and centre, led by Namboodiripad and Jyoti Basu, staged a walk-out and appealed to the party to repudiate Dange and the 'reformist line'. The split became final when all signatories to the appeals were suspended from the party. The left, organised as the Communist Party of India (Marxist), claimed to be the legitimate communist party of India.

The CPI (M) was born into a hostile political climate. At the time of the holding of its Calcutta Congress, large sections of its leaders and cadres were jailed without trial. Again on 29–30 December, over a thousand CPI (M) cadres were arrested and detained, and held in jail without trial. In 1965 new waves of arrests of CPI(M) cadres took place in West Bengal, as the party launched agitations against the rise in fares in the Calcutta Tramways and against the then prevailing food crisis. State-wide general strikes and hartals were observed on 5 August 1965, 10–11 March 1966 and 6 April 1966. The March 1966 general strike results in several deaths in confrontations with police forces.

Also in Kerala, mass arrests of CPI (M) cadres were carried out during 1965. In Bihar, the party called for a Bandh (general strike) in Patna on 9 August 1965 in protest against the Congress state government. During the strike, police resorted to violent actions against the organisers of the strike. The strike was followed by agitations in other parts of the state.

**Ideology and Programme**

The CPI (M) is inspired by an ideology which having
shifted from a revolutionary to a reformist orientation, is committed to development with redistribution. It is characterized as a ‘developmental and democratic socialist ideology’. It emphasis is on the preservation of democratic institutions on the one hand and the ‘use of state power for facilitating development with redistribution’ on the other. The CPI (M) favored a tactic of united front from below, of alliance with peasants and workers to defeat the Congress, which it regarded as a party of the bourgeoisie and landlord classes. Elections were to be used as a means to mobilise the masses; the Constitution was to be used as 'an instrument of struggle'. The Marxists sought to 'break the constitution from within'. Today the CPI (M) is characterised as a radical-democratic party. Its emphasis is on the preservation of democratic institutions. It lays emphasis on the unity and integrity of India and favours the restructuring of Centre-State relations.

4. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was formed in 1980. Since then it has extended its Influence in the Hindi belt, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Since 1989, it has been trying to extend its base in South India also. Since its formation in 1980, the BJP has been increasing its number of seats in the Lok Sabha gradually. In 1984, general elections it secured only two seats. In 1989 the number of seats increased to 88. In 1991 general elections BJP’s strength in the Lok Sabha increased to 122 which rose to 161 in the 1996 elections. In 1998 it won 180 seats and in 1999 its number in Lok Sabha increased to
182. In the 1999 general elections, BJP contested as an alliance partner in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). In the 2004 general elections BJP as an alliance of NDA could not get the required majority. It is playing the role of the opposition party. The BJP has emerged as a significant national party but its support base as yet is limited to certain areas, rather than spread all over India. Today it occupy a dominant position in every where in India.

**Ideology and Programme**

The BJP believes in Gandhian socialism. The party says that its socialism is inspired not only by Gandhi and JP but also by Deendayal Upadhyaya. It stands for positive secularism and clean government. While laying emphasis on the 'Hindu idiom' in its poll manifesto, the party stands for justice for all and appeasement of none. It has accepted the principle of reservation on Caste basis, of course leaving apart the creamy sections. Party promises 33 per cent reservation of seats in Parliament and State Legislatures for women. The party continues with ideal of nationalism based on "Hindutva". The party lays emphasis on "Swadeshi" to encourage Indian industry and production as against multi-nationals or foreign companies. The party also favours smaller and stronger states, desires to abolish Article 370, favours uniform civil code and would like to establish Human Rights Commission.

5. **All India Trinamool Congress (AITMC))**

Founded in January 1998 by Mamata Banerjee, the All India Trinamool Congress (AITMC), popularly called the Trinamool Congress or AITMC, is a National political party. It
has formed the present government in the 2011 Vidhan Sabha elections in the state of West Bengal, after defeating the 34-year rule of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) or CPIM. The AITMC which is a breakaway faction of the Indian National Congress has a centre-left political position with political ideologies of secularism and populism.

The AITMC is the brainchild of Mamata Banerjee. After being a member of the Congress for two decades, Banerjee formed her own party in 1998, as approved by the Election Commission of India. AITMC formed an alliance with the BJP in the NDA coalition at the Centre in 1999. Mamata Banerjee was allotted the Ministry of Railways during the NDA regime, but she resigned within a short span of time, having split with the NDA. In the general elections in 2009, the AITMC aligned with the Congress in the UPA coalition. However, due to the ‘anti-people’ policies of the Congress-led UPA government such as introducing FDI in retail sector, disinvestment of profit-making PSUs and increasing the price of diesel, the AITMC severed ties with the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in September 2012. Today, the AITMC is the sixth largest political party in the Lok Sabha with a total of nineteen seats. It has a visible presence not only in the state of West Bengal, but other states like Tripura, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, where it has a significant number of MLAs in the Vidhan Sabha of these respective states. In the state Legislative Assemblies of Assam and Uttar Pradesh, the AITMC has one MLA each. It draws its mass base primarily from the states of West Bengal and Manipur.
6. **National People's Party (NPP)**

In January 2013, P. A. Sangma launched the party on the national level. He announced that his party would be in alliance with the National Democratic Alliance led by Bharatiya Janta Party. Sangma also reiterated that though the membership of the party is open to all, it shall be a tribal centric party. Sangma who has been a nine-time Member of Parliament, had announced to form a new political party soon after his expulsion from the Nationalist Congress Party in July 2012, when he refused to accept party decision to quit the 2012 Indian presidential election. Currently it is a part of North-East Regional Political Front consisting of political parties of then or the east which has supported the National Democratic Alliance.

In 2015, in a rare move election commission has suspended NPP for its failure to provide party's expenditure during Lok Sabha Elections held in 2014. NPP became first party to get suspended by EC. In September 2015, the leaders of six parties—Samajwadi Party, Nationalist Congress Party, Jan Adhikar Party, Samras Samaj Party, National People's Party and Samajwadi Janata Party announced the formation of a third front known as the Socialist Secular Morcha. National People's Party is fighting on 3 seats as part of Socialist Secular Morcha in 2015 Bihar Legislative Assembly election. In May 2016, after the Bharatiya Janata Party led National Democratic Alliance formed its first government in Assam, and formed a new alliance called the North-East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) with Himanta
Biswa Sarma as its convener. The Chief Ministers of the north eastern states of Sikkim, Assam and Nagaland too belong to this alliance. Thus, the National People's Party joined the BJP-led NEDA. The NPP contested 9 candidates in the 2017 Manipur Legislative Assembly election and won 4 seats.

In March 2018, The NPP came second behind Indian National Congress by winning 19 seats in the 2018 Meghalaya legislative assembly election. Conrad Sangma staked claim to form government with a letter of support from the 34 MLA, that included 19 from NPP, 6 from United Democratic Party, 4 from People's Democratic Front, two each from Hill State People's Democratic Party and Bharatiya Janata Party, and an independent. It was accorded national party status on 7 June 2019. It is the first political party from Northeastern India to have attained this status.

7. National Congress Party (NCP)

The National Congress party formed on 25\textsuperscript{th} May 1999 by Sharad Pawar and Tariq Anwar. Maharashtra is the influential base of the party and its current leader Shri Sharad Pawar. The party symbol is clock. The party became the part of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government at the centre.

**Ideology and Programme**

The founding principles of the party as pronounced by the party were:

1. Strengthening the forces of nationalism with an emphasis on the egalitarian and secular ethos of the Indian Republic and combating fundamentalism and sectarianism
2. Maintaining the unity and integrity of India by strengthening federalism and decentralization of power up to the village level

3. Promoting economic growth through competition, self-reliance, individual initiative and enterprises with emphasis on equality and social justice.

4. Rule of law and constitutional order based on Parliamentary and participatory democracy.

5. Empowerment of weaker sections, the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, the disabled and the women.

6. Strengthening the forces of peace within the country attempting to secure universal and non-discriminatory disarmament and

7. Institutionalized and democratic functioning of the party.

Electoral Performance

The State of Maharashtra is the stronghold of NCP. The NCP was a coalition partner in Maharashtra government since October 2004 assembly elections and won 71 seats. In 2004 Lok Sabha elections the party won 9 seats with 1.8% votes, while in 2019 elections the NCP won 9 seats with 2.24% vote share though its support base increased marginally. Due to anti-incumbency against Congress and corruption charges against NCP, the NCP reduced 6 seats with 0.4% vote share in 2014 Lok Sabha election. Manifesto for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, The Nationalist Congress Party promised to open talks with the Pakistan. The party said that if voted to power the party will discuss terrorism with Pakistan and tagline its
manifesto is ‘Aao Milkar Desh Banaye’. But NCP won only 5 seats with 1.39 % vote share in 2019 Lok Sabha elections. NCP base is more skewed, with Marathas contributing 30 percent of the party’s vote.

8. BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY (BSP)

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is formed on 14 April 1984 as an expression of Dalit resurgence. It was formed by Kanshi Ram, a Dalit Ramdasia Sikh from Punjab. Its election symbol is an elephant. The roots of Bahujan Samaj Party and consequently, its nature and ideology are different from other Dalit movements/parties. It has been emerging slowly in certain parts of the country both as a result of opportunities provided by a democratic system and failure of other national parties to provide social justice to Dalits. In late 1960s, poverty, economic backwardness and increasing atrocities on SCs by the upper and Middle Caste led to the formation of most of the militant organization- Dalit Panthers in Maharashtra, Bhim Sena and Dalit Sangarsh Samiti in Karnataka.

Ideology and Programme

Its ideology is "Social Transformation and Economic Emancipation" of the "Bahujan Samaj". It also includes religious minorities like Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Jains and Parsis. They see these groups as victims of the "Manuwadi" system for millennia, a system which benefited upper-Caste Hindus only. B. R. Ambedkar, a champion of lower-Caste rights, is an important ideological inspiration. The party claims
not to be prejudiced against upper-Caste Hindus. In 2008, while addressing the audience, Mayawati said: "Our policies and ideology are not against any particular Caste or religion. If we were anti-upper Caste, we would not have given tickets to candidates from upper Castes to contest elections". Satish Chandra Mishra, a BSP senior leader, is upper Caste. The party also believes in egalitarianism and holds a strong emphasis on social justice. The main propaganda plank is to fight against Brahmanical Culture or Hindu order based on the Caste system, which promotes graded inequalities and social injustice. They are known as ‘Ambhedhkarite Parties’ with militant ideologies. It is based on the writings and speeches of Ambedkar but draws heavily from those of Kanshi Ram.

**Electoral Performance**

The BSP entered electoral politics soon after its formation and has steadily building up its strength at the State and the national level. The 2014, Lok Sabha elections saw the BSP become the third-largest national party of India in terms of vote percentage, having 4.2% of the vote across the country but gaining no seats. The BSP has its main base in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh where it was the second-largest party in the 2019 Indian general election with 19.3% of votes and in the 2017 and in Uttar Pradesh elections with over 22% of votes.

**Regional Political Parties: An Overview**

One of the notable features of the Indian Party System is the presence of a large number of regional parties. By regional
party we mean a party which generally operates within a limited geographical area and its activities are confined only to a single or handful of states. Further as compared to the broad ranging diverse interests of national parties, the regional parties represent the interest of a particular area. In simple words, regional parties differ from All India parties both in terms of their outlook as well as the interests they pursue. Their activities are focused on specific issues concerning the region and they operate within the limited area. They merely seek to capture power at the state or regional level and do not aspire to control the national government. It is noteworthy that in India, the number of regional parties is much larger than the national parties and some of the States are being ruled by the regional parties, viz., Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Assam, Jammu & Kashmir etc.

It is suggested that a regional political party must satisfy three specific criteria. The first criterion must, naturally be the territorial differential. By its very nature, regional parties restrict its area of action to a single region or a state. The second criterion of a regional political party is that, topically, it articulates and seeks to defend a regionally based ethnic or religious-cultural identity. Thus DMK and AIDMK act as the voice and champions of Tamil cultural nationalism against the inroads of what is perceived as the Aryan imperialism of the north. In the third place, it is in the very nature of a regional party to be “primarily concerned with exploiting local sources of discontent or pressing a variety of prim or dial demands based on language, caste, community or religion”. This is so
because the electoral destiny of these parties is incapably linked with their respective regions.

The emergence of regional parties in India has a geopolitical rationale. India is a continental polity with a wide range of socio-cultural and ethnic diversities. Under condition of democratic culture, these diversities are bound to and indeed did aspire for political autonomy. One way of expression of political autonomy in a federation is the formation of regional parties and groups, in order to bargain with the center for a better regional development.

**Role of Regional and State Parties.**

In India, each State has its own political parties. Most of these regional parties have no ideological commitments. They represent the interest of particular linguistic, religious, regional, and ethnic, caste or cultural groups. Generally they stand for greater autonomy for the States. Some of them are communal in character, others are openly separatist.

The most important of the state parties are the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam [DMK], All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam [AIADMK], Telugu Desham, Assam Gana Parishad, Akali Dal, Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal [RJD], Trinmul Congress, Tamil Manila Congress [TMC] and National Conference. Some of these are of great significance in their localities, and can give the Congress stiff competition in these areas. They usually are built around a few leading personalities and emphasize communal, caste or sectional interests and loyalties.
In their own localities a number of local parties or groupings have scored impressive victories. Notable among these were the Gantantra Parishad and Utkal Congress in Orissa, the Jharkand party in Bihar, Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti and the Maha Gujarat Janata Parishad in Maharashtra and Gujarat sections of Mumbai State, Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, Akali Dal in Punjab, DMK and ANNA-DMK in Tamil Nadu, National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, the Muslim League in Kerala and SP in Uttar Pradesh.

The Akali Dal in Punjab, the National Conference in Jammu Kashmir, and the AIDMK and DMK in Tamil Nadu have become a powerful political force in their respective states. Barely, six months after coming into existence, Telugu Desam successfully stormed the Congress stronghold in Andhra Pradesh. The Assam Gana Parishad was formed in the fall of 1985, and was swept to power by the year end. For some years, Congress has had an informal alliance with the AIDMK in Tamil Nadu and it joined Farooq Abdullah’s coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir. The All Party Hill Leaders Conference [APHLC], which was mainly responsible for the creation in 1970 of an autonomous tribal state of Meghalaya within the state of Assam and the Nagaland nationalist organization, which had been continuously in power since the state of Nagaland was formed in 1963, are parties of regional outlook. In West Bengal, the Bangla Congress, Forward Block and Socialist Unity Centre, the Bangla Congress and the Trinomul Congress in west Bengal, the Kerala Congress in Kerala and Tamil Manila Congress
[TMC] in Tamil Nadu were outstanding examples of political groups that were formed almost exclusively by dissident Congressman. An outstanding example was the Bharatiya Kranti Dal [BKD] which won 98 seats in the U.P Assembly in the mid-term elections in 1969.

Regional parties in state politics are a greater force and they have captured the governmental power from the hands of All-India Parties in states like Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Sikkim, Nagaland, Goa, Orissa, Meghalaya, Manipur and Jammu and Kashmir. In Indian politics they are gradually emerging as a powerful force. For example, in the 1977 and 1980 Lok Sabha elections, regional parties won 52 and 35 seats respectively. After the Congress split of 1969, Mrs. Gandhi’s government at the centre had depended on the support of regional parties like DMK. In the 8th Lok Sabha, Telugu Desam, a regional party had the largest number of MPs from the opposition bench. After the verdict of the ninth Lok Sabha elections, regional parties like DMK and TDP, as a partner of National Front swept to power at the Centre.

The outcome of the 12th and 13th Lok Sabha elections [1998 and 1999] brings home the truth that the path to power in this society lies in the creation of political, regional and social alliances. The BJP with its allies has emerged as the largest vote getter in the country. The BJP led coalition embraces the entire gamut of Indian politics- from Akali Dal to AIADMK or DMK and from Samata to Trinamul. C.P Bhambhri has very lightly observed “The Lok Sabha elections of 1989, 1998 and
1999 provided an opportunity to major regional parties to play an important role in mainstream politics”

The Major Regional Political Parties

They are number of regional parties exist here, mostly short lived and often ad hoc purpose as a bargaining century. We will now discuss in somewhat more details those regional parties which are showing some stable characteristics. A brief sketch of the ideologies of some such parties is given below:

1) Akali Dal

It is the oldest and the most powerful party in Punjab. For more than 80 years it is spearheading the cause of Sikhs. The party membership is confined to Sikhs. Though of late some non-sikh members are given the party symbol to contest elections it is very rare. There is a social component involved in the structure of the party. This party is supported by rich Jat Sikh peasantry. The Scheduled Castes among the Sikhs do not find any place in the party's high ranks. The major interest of the party lies in increasing the prosperity of the Sikh peasantry.

Historically the Akali movement started around 1920's. To begin with it was a socio-religious reform movement but soon got converted into a political one. Around 1940, it demanded an independent state for Sikhs. But after partition the demand was abandoned and instead the party insisted for forming a separate State for Punjabi speaking people. For the first time in 1950's the Akali Dal started an agitation for carving out a separate State. It was in 1966, that demand got fulfilled. It is both a religious and political party. Religiously,
it wants the protection of Sikh Panth. Any interference with the affairs of Gurudwaras is treated as an attack on their Panth. The bitterness after “operation blue star” is the example of Sikh sentiments. The sentiment might be shared by all the sikh people cutting across the political lines but it is the Akali Dal and such other Sikh political organizations who articulate the sentiments in a more politically profound manner. Apart from protecting the sanctity of Sikh panth the Akali Dal also has certain definite views on constitutional provisions regarding Federal Structure. It stands for the State's autonomy. In a resolution the party demanded “centre's sphere should be limited to foreign affairs, defence and communication”. In October 1973, the Akali Dal passed a resolution which comes to be known as “Anandapur Sahib Resolution”. This resolution gave a clear picture of the goals for which the party stands. Some of the points in the resolution are controversial as for instance treating Sikhs as a separate qaum-nation.

The main points are as under: 1) The Akali Dal is the very embodiment of the hopes and aspirations of the sikh nation (qaum). It is fully entitled to its representation. 2) The concept of a distinct and independent identity of Panth should be recognized. 3) The political goal is the pre-eminence of the Khalsa. 4) Restrict the centre's authority to defence, foreign relations, currency and communication only. It recently welcomed F.D.I.'s in retail trade although its partner B.J.P. is opposed to that move.

2) The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K.)

In the Tamil speaking areas of south India, a movement to
stress the separate identity of Dravidians started around 20's. It was basically a revolt against Brahminical domination. E.V.R. who was with Congress left the party on ideological ground – that the party is dominated by North Indians. The party named Dravida Kazhagam (D.K.) was formed in 1945. It developed a thesis that the South Indians – Dravidians are original inhabitants. The Aryans came from outside India. They drove the Dravidians down to south and established their imperialism. The North-South division is clear and candid. So the traditional Hindu religion which is based on Vedas, Sanskrit literature is denounced as cultural imperialism of Aryans. The Brahmins were accused of helping to spread Aryan culture down the south. The animosity against Brahmins made E.V.R. to deny the existence of God. The copies of Ramayana the holy book of Hindus were burnt to protest the Aryan expansion. For D.K. Ravana is a Dravidian hero. Such type of fanatical ideologies permeated around 40's and 50's. There was a time when Dravidian parties wanted to form a separate independent state out of India. However, with the formation of Indian constitution the earlier demand for secession was given up. Now the demand is more for state autonomy. The D.K. was split and a new party the D.M.K. was formed. It faced many political upheavals. It partly moderated its demands. But the two main planks of ideology remain intact. It is totally opposed to Hindi as the national language. Its opposition to Hindi is rather based on illogical foundation. Because Hindi is supposed to be closer to Sanskrit and since Sanskrit represents Brahmical culture, the acceptance of that language would amount to enslavement to Aryan culture. Its
fanatical approach to language issue remains intact. In its new demand for greater State autonomy the party wants the constitution to be amended to secure “Utmost autonomy to the States”. A constitutional amendment to provide English to be continued as an official language and to delete the provision empowering Hindi as national language is demanded. In social field the party stands for reservation in Jobs and such pro-active measures. It is being recognized as champion of Backward Castes because to opposition to Brahmins. Though critics say the party is dominated of certain specific Castes like Nadars, Mudliars and Scheduled Castes have no place in important positions in the party. D.M.K. wants the article 356 to be removed. It opposes the power of centre to impose the President's rule in states. While agreeing on almost all issues on foreign policy of Indian govt., it strongly feels for the Tamils in Sri Lanka. It is opposed to Sri- Lankan government's policy towards the Tamils and had lent support to Tamil's right in Sri Lanka. Recently it forced the central govt. to abandon its proclaimed policy of non-interference in other countries affairs by international organization and made the govt. to vote in favour of a U.N. resolution condemning Sri Lanka army excesses on Tamil civilians and calling for international observations. This is clearly a pressure tacticks and D.M.K. uses it very calculatedly. For the party Tamils interests predominants the other. Whether it is inter-state water dispute like Cauvery or the height of Mullaperiyar dam in Kerala D.M.K. never looks beyond the narrow Tamil internets. The party split in 1972 and a new party by the name
3) AIADMK (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam)

AIADMK was formed by M.G. Ramachandran who fell from D.M.K. chief Karunanidhi. The party faced many ups and downs after the demise of the founder M.G.R. but under the charismatic leadership of Jayalalita the party has become very strong and currently ruling Tamil Nadu. The party accepted “Annaism” as the basis of its ideology. It is a combination of self respect of Tamils, Parliamentary Democracy, rationalism and Democracy. In economics it stands for socialism and public sector. Creation of Casteless society is another ideal of the party. Basically there is no difference in ideology between D.M.K. and AIADMK. But the attitude of AIADMK towards issues like culture, language, Indian religious sentiments is more tolerable and flexible. It did not subscribe to the view of north v/s south. Nor it is opposed to Hindu religion and customs. Infact Jayalalita is chief minister advised the central govt. to allow Hindus to construct Ram temple at Ayodhya. The concepts of anti-Hindi, anti-north do not find much space in party's ideology. On economic issues, the party is opposed to FDI in retail trade and criticized the fresh liberalization measures undertaken by govt. When the central govt. wanted to form a body to fight terrorist activities Jayalalita took the lead in opposing that move, as she argued it would encroach upon the powers of state. In this endeavour she joined hands with Narendra Modi, the C.M. of Gujrat. So basically a federalist party AIDMK leader wants the States to have greater say on public policy measures.
4) Shivsena

The party was formed by Bal Thackeray around 1967. It stands for Justice for Marathi people. Its argument is local Maharashri Youth are denied Job opportunities because of influx of outsiders. It stands for 'sons of soil' theory which proclaims 80% jobs be reserved for local youth. Originally the party started as the anti-communist party, but later made alliances with many parties. The party takes inspiration from historical figures like Shivaji who is credited to be the pride of Marathi culture. It wants Marathi should be used in all official correspondence. It had strong views on inter-state boundary disputes. The border dispute with Karnataka is very emotional significance to the party. It had resorted to violent demonstrations seeking the merger of Marathi speaking areas like Belgam into Maharashtra. It stands for the unity of Maharashtra and is opposed to formation of Vidharbha as a separate state. The party also exhibited fervent nationalism and has openly spoken against Muslim communalism. It was once anti-south but of late it has become anti-Muslim. The party prides itself in “Hindutva” philosophy and has alliance with the BJP. Though many time it takes a different stand from the BJP on issues concerning Marathi interest. The party basically revivalist in nature is also trying to expand the base by forging alliance with one of the splinter group of the Republican Party of India. (Aathwale faction) The party faced split when a new faction in the name of Maharashtra Nav Nirman Samiti was formed.
5) Telugu Desam

This is a comparatively new political phenomenon in Andhra politics which had a strong Congress foot hold, started in 1982 by the film star N. R. Rama Rao. As mentioned earlier, the party originated as a reaction to Indira Gandhi's policy of frequently changing unpopular chief ministers and imposing them on the Andhra Pradesh. The party emphasizes the Telugu people's self-respect and pride. Delhi's intervention meant the Telugu people are incapable of self-government. This had caught up with regional pride. Basically the party follows populist policies. N.T.R. started 2 Rs. Rice scheme, for poor people and was very popular despite heavy losses to public exchequer, similarly the reservation of lower Castes, old age pensioners, were announced. Telugu Desam like all regional parties stands for greater state autonomy. But there is no animosity against other states, nor did the party ever speak of secession. The party took a lead in forming National Front and installed a non-congress govt. at Centre. The party faced internal revolt and with the death of N.T. Rama Rao, his son-in-law who managed the revolt took the reins of the party. The new ideology of Telugu Desam is rather vague. To begin with it pleaded for technological revolution and computer knowledge for all social evils, did not give importance to agriculture and faithfully implemented the World Bank programme. After losing power the party is trying to win back popular support by announcement of populist schemes like free power supply to farmers, writing off loans to farmers and increase in reservation to the O.B.C. Recently the party wants
legislative seats to be reserved to the O.B.C.s. To prove its secular image it got itself distanced from its one time ally B.J.P. and announcing reservation for Muslims. Opposing liberalization, reformation measures the party is befriending with leftist forces at state and national level.

6) National Conference

The party is confined to Jammu and Kashmir. It wants the separate status of J&K to remain intact. It prepared a report called National Conferences’ Autonomy Report (1999). Following are the main points of the report. 1) Grant permanent status to Article 370, the existing provision is deemed to be a temporary measure. 2) Put J& K out of the ambit of the Supreme Court and the Election commission. 3) Reserve all subjects except Defense, External affairs and Communication for the state. 4) Change the nomenclature of J&K Governor to Sadar e- Riyasat and chief minister to Prime Minister. 5) Review Centre – state financial relations. Comptroller and Auditor General's, Scrutiny should not apply to J & K of course; this autonomy plan was rejected by various political parties. But the spirit behind the resolution shows the N.C. is not still prepared to accept the truth that J & K is a part of Indian Union. Though not openly advocating secession it is aiming to weaken the centre power as much as possible and wants to carve out a separate political entity for itself. There was also demand for withdrawing the army from disturbed areas and removing the Army Special Power Act. All these developments are a challenge to Union govt. How it can win the confidence of local people and keep the unity of country intact is the crucial issue.
The term 'secular' is derived from the Latin word 'Saeculum' means ‘age’ or ‘the present age’. It indicates a state of being not connected with and separated from religion. This concept had its origin in a particular western milieu, but in terms of its applicability, it has a universal appeal. It was first of all a Christian phenomenon developed in Western Europe after the break-up of the medieval republics of Christendom (the Christian Commonwealth) into different national and territorial States. "It was only after the prolonged and devastating territorial wars of religion had exhausted Continental Europe, that the Western Europe accepted this notion of peaceful co-existence of States subscribing to different religious creed. However this process has been an all-time gradual one and the conditions and events that contributed to this process differ from country to country. A secular India, Nehru explained at the outset, did not mean a country without religion. It only ensured the institutional separation of the state from religion and a balanced approach to all faiths.

**Secularism in India**

A State is characterised as "secular" when it has no official established religion and it does not discriminate among its citizens on the basis of religion. There is general argument over this characteristic of secular state. However with regard to the purpose and object of a "secular state" there is hardly any
unanimity among the scholars and practitioners of secularism. A secular state as defined scientifically means a state, which recognises every citizen as equal and does not recognise any social or religious stratification as vehicles for exercising political rights, which is tolerant towards all religions with special emphasis on the protection of minorities and preservation of communal harmony. The essence of secularism however, rest on two basic principles:

a) Separation of religion from politics.
b) Acceptance of religion as purely and strictly private affair of individuals having nothing to do with the State.

Meaning of Secularism

Secularism as a concept has its origin in western countries and relates to the separation of the church from the State, giving the state a position of neutrality between different religions, amounting to even while at indifference of state towards religion, while the same time guaranteeing all citizens the right to profess any religion. In some ways the word 'secular' was used as a contrast to the word 'religious', which sometimes led people to believe that secularism is opposed to religion. But broadly speaking it was used not as opposed to religion but as divorced from all religion or religion having nothing to do with the conduct of state affairs. Still a new "English Dictionary on historical principles" defines secularism as: The doctrine that morality should be based solely on regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life, to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or in a future State. The same idea is also followed by the
"Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church", which explains secularism as denoting a system which seek to interpret and order life on principles taken solely from this world without recourse to belief in God and a future life.

In India the concept has been used not as state's indifference meaning towards religion(s) but as treatment of all religions in an equal fashion and ruling out discrimination of any Indian on the ground of his religion. Use of 'secularism' in this sense has been characterised by Ashish Nandi as "Indianisim" which has no place in Oxford English Dictionary or in the Webster Dictionary. The long practice and peculiar conditions have given a distinct meaning to secularism in Indian context. It has come to be interpreted in a positive sense, unlike its negative connotation in the western world. The State is indifference but equal respect and distance towards all religions.

Technically, the secular State is not a state which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with religion. Upon closer examination it will be seen that the conception of a secular State involves three distinct but inter-related sets of relationships concerning the State, religion and individual-the three sets of relations are:

1. Religion and the individual (freedom of religion).
2. The state and the individual (citizenship).
3. The state and religion (separation of state and religion).
The western concept of secularism implying anti-religious ideology cannot be applied to India, which is not only a multi-religious but highly religious society. As rightly observed by late Smt. Indira Gandhi "Secularism is neither a religion nor indifference to religion but equal respect for all religions", not mere tolerance but positive respect- without it, there is no future for the nation", Even Western writers have supported this view, for instance, Harvey Cox has stressed that secularism does not exclude religion; on the contrary, it breeds religious peaceful, co-existence.

There have been two variants of secularism the Gandhian version and the Nehruvian version. Gandhi believed Hinduism and other religion being tolerant and secular could not make state non-secular. Therefore, there was no need for separation between State and religion. He believed that State while giving fair treatment to all religions, could still maintain equal distance from all religions as well as religious communities. Nehru held that whatever the characteristics of the various religions may have been, it did not matter because economic development and scientific culture would provide a sufficient basis for secular tolerance. Nehru was an agnostic and his view was that of neutrality of the State in matters of religion i.e. State would have nothing to do with religion. Thus his concept of secularisms was negative mould of equal distance from all religions.

Jawaharlal Nehru has been a leading champion of the concept of the secular state. Indeed the creation of India as a secular state may be accepted as 'one of his greatest
achievements', to use the words of Chester Bowles. Nehru had a great aversion to the intrusion of religious factors into politics, he was especially concerned with transforming India from a 'caste-ridden society' in which communalism constituted a major threat to all the values that he cherished to a nation state which included people of all religions and shades of opinion and was essentially secular as a State. Religion is all right he said, "When applied to ethics and morals, but it is not good mixed up with politics".

Nehru insisted that free India should be a non-communal, secular State. "The government of a country likes India". Nehru declared "With many religions that have secured great and develop followings for generations can never function satisfactorily in the modern age except on a secular basis." He boasts of the fact that our Constitution is based on secular conception and gives freedom to all religions.

Gandhiji was the most powerful impulse of secularism in our country. He was of the view that the religiosity our society was its great strength, which should be utilised at the political platform. Religion in the best sense of the term was the strongest part of the value system of our society. In 1928 Gandhiji declared: After long study and experience I have come to these conclusion that (i) all religions are true (ii) all religions have some error in them (iii) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism. My veneration for other faiths is the same as for my own faith. Gandhi was of the view that there should not be any State religion. "Even if the whole community had one religion, state interference would probably
always be unwelcome". His view was that the state should be secular in the sense that everyone living in it should be entitled to profess his religion without let or hindrance so long as the citizens obeyed the law of the land. There should be no interference with missionary effort but no mission could enjoy the patronage of the State.

Nehru also described, Mahatma Gandhi as “essentially a man of religion, a Hindu to the innermost depths of his being". In a famous passage in his Autobiography Gandhi wrote, "I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means. Gandhi and Nehru, the master and disciple approached the problem of the relation between religion and politics from very different angles, but essentially their positions were not so far apart as far as the nature of the Indian state as concerned. Gandhi, a deeply religious man saw merit and truth in all religions and he "felt that any form of political association based exclusively on adherence to a particular religion was worse than undemocratic”.

**Constitutional Provisions of Secularism**

The Constitution of India stands for a secular State. The state has no official religion, secularism pervades its provisions, which give full opportunity to all persons to profess, practice and propagate any religion of their choice. The Constitution not only guarantees a person's freedom of religion and conscience but also ensures freedom for one who has no religion, and it scrupulously restrains the State from
making any discrimination on ground of religion. A single citizenship is assured to all persons irrespective of their religion.

By the Constitution (Forty second Amendment) Act, 1976, the Preamble was amended for the words 'sovereign democratic Republic' by the words 'Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic'. Explaining the secular character of the Indian Constitution the Supreme Court said, "There is no mysticism in the secular character of the State". Secularism is neither anti God nor pro God; it treats alike the devout, the antagonistic and the atheist. It eliminates God from the matters of the State and ensures that no one shall be discriminated on the ground of the religion.

Article 14 grants equality before the law and equal protection of the laws to all. Article 15 enlarges the concept of secularism to the widest possible extent prohibiting discrimination on grounds of religion, race, Caste, sex or place of birth. Article 16 guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters of public employment and reiterates that there would be no discrimination on the basis of religion, race, Caste, sex, descent, place of birth and residence.

Under Articles 29 and 30 certain cultural and educational rights are guaranteed to minorities. Article 29 guarantees the right to any section of the citizen's residing in any part of the country having a distinct language script or culture of its own to conserve the same. Article 30 provides that "All minorities whether based on religion or language shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice".
In M. Ismail Faruqui v/s. Union of India (Ayodhya case) the Supreme Court has summarised the true concept of secularism under the Constitution as follows:

“It is clear from the constitutional scheme that it guarantees equality in the matter of all individuals and groups irrespective of their emphasising that there is no religion of the state itself. The Preamble of the Constitution in Articles 25 to 28 emphasises this aspect and indicates that it is in this manner the concept of secularism is embodied in the constitutional scheme as a creed adopted by the Indian people has to be understood while examining the constitutional validity of any legislation. The concept of secularism is one facet of the right to equality as the central golden thread in a fabric depicting the pattern of the scheme in our Constitution”.

**Challenges to Secularism**

India professes to be a secular state. It is beyond dispute that India is a true Secular state in the real sense of the term. However, very often we find traces of communal elements which pose serious threat to the secular fabric of Indian society and polity. Every now and then we witness communal disturbances and riots in one state or the other. Recently the Supreme Court judgment in the Shah Bano Case and the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill, 1986 raised a nation-wide controversy between secularism on the one hand and fundamentalism on the other. Secularism and communalism seemed to be opposed to each other. Why it happened? Is India not secular or has Indian secularism failed to foster unity among different religious groups? Are
communal forces stronger than the secular ones? To answer these questions it is important to understand the circumstances under which the concept of secularism were adopted in India and its working since independence. India is, considered to be a “confederation of religious communities, the combination of politics and religion, resulting in communal politics is the most dangerous combination and must be put to an end”. It is harmful to the country as a whole; it is harmful to the majority, but probably it is most harmful to any minority that seeks to name some advantage from it. While Communalism and Fascism are tightening their hold on the life of nation, no organized, dedicated and determined effort is being made to loosen that hold and to nourish and strengthen secularism. There are Hindus who identify secularism with Muslim appeasement and Muslim who dismiss secularism an anti-Islamic.

The calculated rise of the BJP took place on a fundamentalist Hindu platform to gain dividends in states in principally North India and Maharashtra as well as at national level. India was portrayed as a Hindu nation. The BJP and the SanghParivar use Ayodhya and other Hindu images continuously for the protection of their narrow political gains. Despite the electoral dividends, the Hindu appeal spun out of control. Both the slogan and its message were albumenized. A nation that watched the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992 was dismayed to see wanton destruction of books at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune. Even the BJP's Hindu supporters are uncomfortable with such ravages in the name of Hinduism.
Suggestions

Each community must respect the sentiments of the other. Concerted efforts must therefore, be made to promote a secular way of life and shed the communal hangover of the British Raj. We must undoubtedly ensure that there is no oppression of the minorities. At the same time, we must remove all grounds which generate ill will in the minds of majority against minority and which pamper Hindu fundamentalism. Another obstacle in way of secularism in India is that politics in recent years has taken a regional character and irresponsible regional language newspapers, which deliberately fan the flames of communalism, have vitiated the atmosphere. Interested people who have local community interests control these newspapers. The national interest is therefore subordinated to petty personal or group end. Although most of the national newspapers are maintaining a commendable standard of objective reporting, the radio being government controlled could also be made a powerful means of propagating secularism. The vast majority of people uncritically digest whatever they are told in print. The news media can be a potent force for good or evil. Some structural safeguards are needed to be introduced to prevent the use of media for wrong ends, which of course is a challenging and complicated task. However, the greater responsibility lies with the media itself.

Cultural identity is another aspect of the communal problem. This crisis largely arose because history was taught with a bias. The Hindus had one set of heroes and the Muslims
another. A Janata leader has said that the distortions of history should be removed from the textbooks, which should be rewritten with a correct balanced perspective. Casteism may also be considered an impediment to secularism. Dr. K. N. Katju, the Minister of Home, once declared (1953) that "without a Hindu majority, India could not have adopted a secular Constitution". His point was that the religious tolerance fostered by Hindu catholic outlook was the foundation of the secular State. Economic growth and structural differentiation are extremely necessary for the development of secularism. It is also essential that we overcome the religion-phobia in our educational system.

We leave religious education entirely in the hands of bodies, which are seldom adequately equipped to undertake the task and usually offer narrow, and obscurantist interpretations of the living truths that permeate religious traditions. The new education policy formulated by the present government talks only of value education, this can only be done if our educational system accepts the multiplicity of our religious traditions. The Inculcation of loyalty to the Indian nation irrespective of any other grouping or sub-identity would ensure the development of healthy secularism.

The nationalist concept of secularism may not be relevant to the Indian situation because of the strong emotional attachment of Indians to religion; it is rather difficult to replace religious loyalties by national loyalties. There is the likelihood also that a religious man may not accept his duty to strive for the good of a non-religious group or choose national goals in
preference to religious ones. M. N. Roy held that India was not a secular State as the preconditions necessary to it were absent. A theocratic society -one imbued with religious superstition and blind faith can hardly be the soil of a secular state. Roy's concept of Secularism may be unacceptable to some, nevertheless, his analysis of Indian society as being tradition-bound and pervaded by religion does point to the principal challenges to the secular State in India.

Secularism is not feasible in India without social and religious reforms. The important thing is that social and religious activities ought to be extracted from the sphere of the religious authorities and taken over by the state as other secular. Institutions, social custom and laws, which are irrational, have to be changed. In fact, the message of all religions is that all men are children of God. In India we have to bring home to all concerned this essential message of religion.

Challenges to Secularism

In the context of growing religion politics nexus since 1980s onward and problem of religious fundamentalism and communalism, the Nehruvian idea of secularism is being constantly interrogated by intellectuals. It is argued that the secularism as adopted in India is idealistic, not viable as it is influenced by alien western concepts that cannot understand the finer nuances of dynamics of Indian social realities. There is in general tendency, to equate religious fundamentalism with communalism or to treat one as the synonym of the other. In fact, the two are quite distinct and different though they can
become correlated and have many ideological and political elements in common. The common thread between fundamentalism and communalism is in terms of both opposing the separation of religion and politics. In this reference, both propound that there cannot be common truth in all religions. As Bipin Chandra argues, both fundamentalism and communalism strongly advocate for controlling the education system, valorizing the past values, share the notion of their societies achieving near perfection in the past and moreover both oppose secularism as the idea and as the policy of statecraft.

COMMUNALISM

Communalism, as we understand it in our country is blind loyalty to one’s own religious group. It is described as a tool to mobilize people for or against by raising an appeal on communal lines. Communalism is associated with religious fundamentalism and dogmatism.

Abdul Ahmed says, “Communalism is a social phenomenon characterized by the religion of two communities, often leading to acrimony, tension and even rioting between them”. Prabha Dixit writes, “Communalism is a political doctrine which makes use of religious and cultural differences to achieve political ends.

According to Asqhar Ali Engineer, Moin Shakir and Abdul Ahmed, “it is an instrument in the hands of to upper Class to concentrate power by dividing people”. The elites strive to maintain a status quo against transformation by
Communalism may be perceived as a total commitment to a set of beliefs and it is far from rationality.

Communalism emphasises the separate identity of a religious group in relation to other groups. It is based on the belief that religious distinction is most important and fundamental distinction, and this overrides all other distinctions. Communalism believes that the interests of a community can be best promoted by maintaining its separate identity and organising it separately for the promotion of these interests. In its extreme form communalism claims nationhood for the community concerned and seek to raise it to the status of a sovereign State.

Communalism in India has originated during the colonial period. Communal politics claims to derive its ideology, base and support from religion and tradition. It interprets history in a way, which suits its purpose of political mobilisation. A close study of the ideologies of communal organisation reveals that all of them share similar view on important socio-economic and political issues.

Communalism has been explained mainly in two ways: (1) as an ideology or a belief system and (2) as a social phenomenon. Communalism arises out of a belief system. That is, people who follow a particular religion, have, as a result of common social, political and economic interests.

The Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs are different and distinct communities, which are exclusively and separately structured or consolidated in terms of their social identity and
economic interests. The assertion of communal identify formed by a feeling of unity among its followers transform communalism from an ideology into a social process.

Today, the issue of communalism has taken such an acute form that this had overtaken other issues like poverty and unemployment. The frequency of communal violence has increased. The strategies adopted by communal forces to mobilise the masses have been largely in terms of appeal to religious sentiments. This strategy seems to have worked well in the Babri Masjid - Ram Janma Bhoomi issue, which has engulfed the whole country.

The problem of communalism, thus, has begun to appear in a form of a clear ideology and organisation. The ideology and politics of communalism in India are no longer in the fringes of the state process. Several political parties made it a part in their electoral strategy during the recent 1989 elections. It is also became a major threat to national unity and harmony of society.

**Growth of Communalism in India (Pre-independent period)**

During the freedom struggle two kinds of ideologies emerged: (1) That tried to unite Indian people as a nation irrespective of their regional, religious, Caste, and class differences and (2) That tried to divide Indian people along the traditional lines of cleavages and diversities. The emergence of organisation like Muslim league, Jamate-Islami, Hindu Maha Sabha, RSS, is part of this trend. Moreover, the colonial
power, through their policy of divide and rule, contributed further the growth of communalism in India, which ultimately led to the partition of the country. The colonial rules exploited the rival social, economic and political claims of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, tribal and untouchables. The communal award and separate electorates etc. are example of the policy in this direction.

The growth of Indian nationalism gradually acquired a historical dimension from a reformulated view of the Hindu tradition. Leaders like Bal Gangadhara Tilak and Lalalajpat Rai identifying themselves with heroes like Maharana Pratap and Shivaji. They were also opponents of the Mughal rulers. Thus heroes became Hindus and oppressors became the Muslims. The Ganapathi festival and Shivaji Festival organised by Tilak mobilised the masses against the colonial rule, but unfortunately this created, at the same time, suspicion amongst the Muslims. This suspicion ultimately led to the concept of two nation theory and the establishment of the Muslim League.

In order to combat communalism, the leaders of the national movement adopted a policy of unity from above'. Whenever communal crises emerged, only the top leaders of the different communities were consulted in order to bring about communal harmony. The masses were never taken into confidence. Such a strategy helped the community influentials to become leaders. These leaders, through their various roles of conflicts and resolution, helped to a convenient mixing of religion and politics.
Causes for the growth of Communalism in the post independent period

Communalism is basically a political problem. Political opportunities of major political parties help the growth of communalism in India. Despite the well-known commitment to secularism, the Congress (I) leadership has often made alliances with communal parties like Muslim league and the Akali Dai, thus giving political respectability to communalism. The Muslims have successfully opposed the move to enact a uniform civil code which every modern state possesses. Instead of combating communalism and persuade the people to accept an egalitarian, just and enlightened way of life, the congress leadership has often set wrong tradition and practices. The latest example of this kind was in 1984, when the Parliament passed special legislation to overcome the judgement in the Shahbhano case.

The way in which the political leadership has been fraternizing Jagatguru, Shahi Imam and Sikh Priests has proved unfortunate. What has the country gained by the Congress move to bring Sant Bhindran Wale in politics. For years Punjab has been a tragedy without mitigation. The operation Blue Star, Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, Delhi killings, Kanpur riots, and the ongoing wave of tension, all cast sad reflection on the self-seeking leadership. As Rajani Kothari said, "the ruling party and the state itself is playing a direct role in communalising the political process. The development is Bihar, Biwandi, Punjab, Meerut and Delhi following the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi has highlighted the role of the
government and the ruling party in spreading tension inciting and even engineering communalism.

Since communalism has social appeal, the non-congress parties including even communists adopt strategies, which have a communal content. The CPI (M) made relations with the Muslim League in Kerala from 1967-69, with All India Muslim League from 1974-86, and with Jana Sangh at the centre between 1977-79, the opportunistic compromises with communal parties and groups for electoral purposes done a great dis-service to the cause of secularism.

Absence of radical programes is also a cause for the growth of communalism. Communalisation of history favour communalism. In independent India, a communal historical approach is the main ideology of communalism. And a history, through which the past glory of a community is sought to be reflected, is keenly sought for by the communalists. One of India's most distinguished historian, Irfan Habib says "We want that every teacher of Aligarh Muslim University should be loyal to the Islamic faith and community". Similar reaction is also made by the Sikh intellectuals.

The role of the priestly class, religious places and festivals has also help the growth of communalism in India. In some states slogan of separatism are heard at large congregation and meetings and places of worship remain centres of armed militants. The religious festivals of Bisakhi, Diwali and Holi are often used to promote communal solidarity. The unusual increase in religious ceremonies and processions such as Bhagawathi Jagaran, Durga Puja, Rath Yathra etc. has
increased opportunities for political leaders to impart communal colour to religious ceremonies.

Today communalism, in its various shapes, has acquired a very dangerous form and alarming proportions in India. It disrupts the pattern of co-existence in our multi religious fraternity. It is a threat to India's nationalist identity, and a tragic set back to our evolving secular culture. It is subversive of our democratic political stability. By killing each other in mindless communal strife, we are in effect killing ourselves, killing the Indian nation, killing our glorious heritage of humanism and composite culture. Therefore communalism should be recognised as enemy number one of our secular democratic polity.

Preventives for the Eradication of Communalism:

The following measures may be taken for the eradication of communalism.

1. Abolition of Communal Parties:

All the political parties which thrive on religious loyalties should be banned or abolished by the government. Even non-political cultural organizations should always be kept under constant vigil so that they cannot preach communalism.

2. Transmission of the Past Heritage:

Feelings of nationalism should be inculcated in the minds of people by reminding them about the glorious moments of history in Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were combined to safeguard the interest of the country.
3. **Public Opinion:**

Efforts should be made through mass media for changing the attitude of people towards other communities. People must be aware of the evils of the communalism.

4. **Inter-Caste and Marriages:**

Youth organizations and other types of associations should be formed in every locality to give opportunity to people of different communities to come closer and know each other. This may help them to practice inter-caste and marriages which will lessen the social distance among the members of different religious groups. Both the Government and people should make efforts for eradication of communal tension and conflict.

**RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM**

Religious fundamentalism as a term has been applied to various types of development that hold religious and political dimensions. Fundamentalists are also known as unsophisticated protesters in a world that is evolving at a very fast rate. Fundamentalism has been defined by Marsden as the demand for a strict adherence to certain theological doctrines, in reaction against Modernist theology. The term was originally coined by its supporters to describe what they claimed were five specific classic theological beliefs of Christianity, and that developed into a Christian fundamentalist movement within the Protestant community of the United States in the early part of the 20th century.

The term usually has a religious connotation indicating
unwavering attachment to a set of irreducible beliefs, but fundamentalism has come to be applied to a broad tendency among certain groups, mainly, although not exclusively, in religion. This tendency is most often characterized by markedly strict literalism as applied to certain specific scriptures, dogmas or ideologies, and a strong sense of the importance of maintaining ingroup and outgroup distinctions, leading to an emphasis on purity and the desire to return to a previous ideal from which it is believed that members have begun to stray. Rejection of diversity of opinion as applied to these established "fundamentals" and their accepted interpretation within the group is often the result of this tendency.

There has been a tremendous upsurge in religion all over the world. All Religions are interacting with modernity which is enshrined in human freedom, market freedom and value freedom as encapsulated or manifested in secularism and democracy. In this march they are positioned differently: Christianity was the first one to negotiate, confront, contain and come to terms with modernity. It has been in the tip of the arrow in this march. The Christian fundamentalism or Christian right as it is known is a reaction or a result of the interaction between modernity and Christianity. Islam and Hinduism, the other major world religions, are way behind in this march. But they are reacting violently through Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism to the onslaught of modernity, secularism and democracy. The character of these religions itself is changing swiftly laced with politics. Religion has
become a tiger. Those who ignore this tiger are likely to be swallowed up by it. All fundamentalisms aim at triumphalism, establishing a global church, nation to reclaim the moral high ground lost to modernity by influencing political agenda of their governments, largely through the media. There is an unholy nexus between religion and politics whose main agenda is to batter secularism and democracy. Christians in India are subjected to atrocities of Hindutva or Hindu cultural nationalism and Islamic terrorism. There is also the “symbolic violence” of Christian fundamentalism.

Revivalism of religious fundamentalism has pitted followers of different religions against each other. In Kashmir, it is Islam against Hindu hegemony; in Gujarat, it is Hindutva forces against Muslims and in Punjab it is Sikhs against Hindus. These tensions are not conflicts of divergent cultures; each one of them is potentially and actually a political movement aiming at realizing not a mere cultural or religious objective. The objective is open or camouflaged, political.
MODULE IV

TRENDS IN INDIAN DEMOCRACY

The Indian democracy has faced the challenges of communalism, regionalism, religious fundamentalism, criminalization of politics, and reservation issues etc. Caste and communalism are the two facts of this challenge. Linguism and regionalism are another one, each one effect sometimes very badly in Indian condition. These have created problems for the maintenance of law and order in the country.

REGIONALISM

Regionalism is not a new phenomenon in the Indian political system. In the pre-independence days it was promoted by the British imperialists and they deliberately encouraged the people of various regions to think in terms of their region rather than the nation as a whole, with a view to maintain their hold over India during the national movement. After Independence the leaders tried to foster a feeling among the people that they belonged to one single nation. The framers of the constitution sought to achieve this by introducing single citizenship for all. With the same objective a unified judiciary, all Indian services, and a strong Central government was provided.

Regionalism has been an important feature of Indian politics since the dawn of independence. It has posed a serious threat to the unity of India. Regionalism means love of a particular region. Regionalism refers to sub-nationalism
demanding the preference for a region as against the country as a whole.

**Meaning of Regionalism:**

Regionalism is the extreme loyalty and love shown to a particular region. It expresses itself in such a distorted notion 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 to 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. It implies excessive attachment to one’s region is preference to the country or the state. In the positive sense it is a political attribute associated with people’s love for their
region, culture, language, etc. with a view to maintain their independent identity. While positive regionalism is a welcome thing in so far maintaining as it encourages the people to develop a sense of brotherhood and commonness on the basis of common language, religion or historical background. The negative sense regionalism is a great threat to the unity and integrity of the country. In the Indian context generally the term regionalism has been used in the negative sense.

The feeling of regionalism may arise either due to the continuous neglect of a particular area or region by the ruling authorities or it may spring up as a result of increasing political awareness of backward people that have been discriminated against. Quite often some political leaders encourage the feeling of regionalism to maintain their hold over a particular area or group of people.

**Causes of Regionalism:**

There are several causes of regionalism in India. These causes are discussed below.

1. **Geographical Cause:**

   Linguistic distribution along geographical boundaries and isolated settlement pattern induce in people the concept of regionalism. Sometimes people live, in such area which appears as a separate region cut off from the rest of the country and thereby may give rise to feelings of separatism among the inhabitants of the region.

2. **Historical Causes:**

   Due to historical reasons people believe that they are
separate from the rest. A feeling of regionalism may develop among the people of a particular region if they believe that they have been politically dominated by the people of other regions.

3. **Economic factors:**

Uneven development in different parts of the country may be considered as the prime reason for regionalism and separatism. There are certain regions which are economically more developed. But there are certain regions which are economically more developed. But there are certain regions which are economically backward even after independence. No effort has been made for regional balance in matters of industrial, agricultural and above all, economic development. This disparity has caused the feeling of relative deprivation and thereby the demand for separate states, for example, Bodoland. Telangana recently State was formed in this principle.

4. **Political and Administrative Factors:**

Political parties, particularly regional parties and local leaders exploit the regional sentiments to capture power. They give emphasis on regional problems in their election manifesto and promise for regional development. This has resulted in the feeling of regionalism. The regional parties like DMK, AIADMK in Tamil Nadu and Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh were formed in this basis of principle.

Regionalism may be a product of cultural and social differences.
Regionalism in India has assumed various forms like:

(a) Demand for State Autonomy: Regionalism has often led to the demand by States for greater autonomy from the Centre. Increasing interference by the Centre in the affairs of the States has led to regional feelings. Demand for autonomy has also been raised by regions within some States of the Indian federation. For example, demand for Telangana and Jharkhand

(b) Secession from the Union: This is a dangerous form of regionalism. It emerges when States demand separation from the center and try to establish an independent identity of their own. For example, demand for Dravida Nadu, Sikhistan, Khalistan and the Mizo demands in Assam. Disputes between States over the sharing of river water, primacy given by the States to the language of majority and to people of their own states in job opportunities have also given rise to feelings of regionalism. Migration of people from backward State to a developed State for employment opportunities have often resulted in a hostile attitude against the migrants for example, problems going on in Karnataka and A.P.

Causes for Growth of Regionalism

In India a number of factors have contributed to the growth of regionalism.

1. 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 and 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.

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.

2. 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.

3. 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, Assam Gana Parishad etc., have encouraged regionalism to capture and retain power.

4. The interaction between the forces of modernisation and mass participation has 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.

5. 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 with the idea that the Central Government was deliberately trying to maintain regional imbalances by neglecting social and economic development of certain areas.

COMMUNALISM

India is a land of diverse religions and cultures. Some of the prominent religions include Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism, etc. While the Hindus constitute the majority; the members of all other religions constitute the minority with the Muslims being the largest minority. Unfortunately a proper adjustment has not taken place between the Hindus and the Muslims which has often resulted in violent outbursts and communal riots. It has asserted by some scholar’s that communalism is not a new phenomenon and has been in existence since the times of the Muslim rule during the medieval period.

The animosity between the Hindus and the Muslims was largely the creation of the British rulers. It created a feeling of hostility among members of these two communities. They introduced separate electorates for the Muslims and patronized Muslim leaders. A large number of Muslims migrated to Pakistan while a sizeable number of them were persuaded to stay on in India with an assurance of security of life, the religion and property. On the other hand, millions of Hindus were forced to leave the territories constituting Pakistan and migrated to India. All these created a serious problem of communal harmony.
Definitions

W.C Smith looks communalism as “Ideology which emphasised the social, political and economic unit, the group of adherents of each religion, and emphasis the distinction, even the antagonism, between such groups.” Bipin Chandra portrays “Communalism is basically ideology. Communal riots are only one consequences of the spread of this ideology” Moin Shakir explained “Communalism as that tendency which seeks to promote religious or sectarian grouping of a people for political purpose.” He explained that there are very deep relations between religion and politics. Religion maintains and encourages communal identity and segregation. Asgahr Ali Engineer identifies communalism as “Secular conflict between two religious communities”

Communal violence involves people of two different religious communities mobilized against each other and carrying the feeling of hostility, emotional fury, exploitation, social discrimination and social neglect. The high degree of cohesion in one community against another is built around tension and polarization. The target is the members of the rival community.

Communalism is a very serious problem looming large over India today. Even though it has been an integral part of socio-political life in India for a very long time, the colonial period is widely considered to be responsible for the large-scale communalisation of India. However, its replacement by an independent secular state which was preceded by the partition of the country on communal lines, was expected to
lay the foundation for a steady decline of the communalisation of Indian society.

The main factors which have caused the growth of communalism in India have been identified as following: a) Influence of Communal Parties and organisations, appeasement policies of political parties, Communal media, literature, Economic backwardness, Separationism and isolationalism among the Muslims, Hindu chauvinism etc.

Today communalism can be seen in varied forms and has acquired a very dangerous situation in India. It disrupts the co-existence in our multi-religious fraternity. It is a setback to secularism of our society. It is the enemy of progress, social change and democracy.

RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM

Fundamentalism has been defined by Marsden as the demand for a strict adherence to certain theological doctrines, in reaction against Modernist theology. The term was originally coined by its supporters to describe what they claimed were five specific classic theological beliefs of Christianity, and that developed into a Christian fundamentalist movement within the Protestant community of the United States in the early part of the 20th century. The term usually has a religious connotation indicating unwavering attachment to a set of irreducible beliefs, but fundamentalism has come to be applied to a broad tendency among certain groups, mainly, although not exclusively, in religion. This tendency is most often characterized by a markedly strict
literalism as applied to certain specific scriptures, dogmas, or ideologies, and a strong sense of the importance of maintaining in group and out group distinctions, leading to an emphasis on purity and the desire to return to a previous ideal from which it is believed that members have begun to stray. Rejection of diversity of opinion as applied to these established "fundamentals" and their accepted interpretation within the group is often the result of this tendency.

There has been a tremendous upsurge in religion all over the world. All Religions are interacting with modernity which is enshrined in human freedom, market freedom and value freedom as encapsulated or manifested in secularism and democracy. In this march they are positioned differently: Christianity was the first one to negotiate, confront, contain and come to terms with modernity. It has been in the tip of the arrow in this march. The Christian fundamentalism or Christian right as it is known is a reaction or a result of the interaction between modernity and Christianity. Islam and Hinduism, the other major world religions, are way behind in this march. But they are reacting violently through Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism to the onslaught of modernity, secularism and democracy. The character of these religions itself is changing swiftly laced with politics. Religion has become a tiger. Those who ignore this tiger are likely to be swallowed up by it.

All fundamentalisms aim at triumphalism, establishing a global church, nation to reclaim the moral high ground lost to modernity by influencing political agenda of their
governments, largely through the media. There is an unholy nexus between religion and politics whose main agenda is to batter secularism and democracy. Christians in India are subjected to atrocities of Hindutva or Hindu cultural nationalism and Islamic terrorism. There is also the “symbolic violence” of Christian fundamentalism. Revivalism of religious fundamentalism has pitted followers of different religions against each other. In Kashmir, it is Islam against Hindu hegemony; in Gujarat, it is Hindutva forces against Muslims and in Punjab it is Sikhs against Hindus. These tensions are not conflicts of divergent cultures; each one of them is potentially and actually a political movement aiming at realizing not a mere cultural or religious objective. The objective is open or camouflaged political.

CRIMINALIZATION OF POLITICS

A major issue in contemporary political scenario in India is 'criminalization of politics.' This is comparatively a new phenomenon but it is now all pervading. The political scholars, senior journalists, the civil society activists and the common men—all are truly concerned about this malady of Indian politics. Despite sincere efforts on the parts of quite a few honest public figures to contain and minimize the problem, it is spreading like cancer in the body of Indian polity. The worst part is that no branch of the government is free from the nuisance. Since almost all the political parties seem to be guilty of either harbouring criminals or using them off and on to achieve political ends, it is unlikely that the politicians would initiate the process of cleansing the fabric of Indian
politics of the crime of criminalization. The cancerous growth of the phenomenon is hindering the operation of constitutional protections of democracy, blemishing central and state legislatures, eating away at the reputation of ministries, demeaning judicial institutions, enmeshing the bureaucrats at all levels and impeding the independent functioning of the media. If India fails to wipe out or at least minimize the scourge of criminalization of politics at the earliest then the very institution of democracy would be in jeopardy.

Definition and constituents of criminalization of politics

The term criminalization is obviously rooted in the word 'crime', which in simple term means an illegal act. However, in criminology the gravity of a crime depends on how the crime is defined. The Oxford Dictionary defines crime as, “an action which constitutes a serious offence against an individual or the state and is punishable by law.” This definition is very comprehensive and relevant for our discussion because it underlines the nature of the offence and also clarifies that it may be committed against an individual or the state. In India, the serious offences are usually identified as murder, rape, fraud, organised crimes, crimes against women, corruption and cyber crimes. These are the broad categories and within each one of them there are various legal terms to connote the severity of that particular crime. For instance 'murder' has sub-categories like homicide (the killing of one person by another regardless of the circumstances), first-degree murder (intentional killing), second-degree murder (unintentional killing), manslaughter (unintentional but reckless conduct of a
person that kills another person), and negligent homicide (killing someone by negligence). The term rape is not politically correct in contemporary India. This offence is part of the crimes against women that include sexual assault, sexual harassment, dowry, child marriage, female infanticide and the widespread crime i.e. domestic violence. Sodomy is also a sex-related crime in India. Then there are offences that are committed by organised cartels (the mafia) that are known as organised crimes. Major among such crimes are drug trafficking, arms trafficking, money laundering, extortion, murder for hire, human trafficking, black-marketing, poaching, political violence and terrorist acts. Property related crimes include burglary, theft, motor-vehicle theft and arson. The category of corruption includes bribery, evasion of taxes embezzlement etc. The ubiquitous presence of computers today has led to a new category that is known as cyber crimes that include spamming, computer hacking, e-mail fraud and so on. The person or persons who are guilty of such serious offences are criminals and if they intervene in politics directly or indirectly then it leads to criminalization of politics. Politics is the other term included in the expression 'criminalization of politics.' in this context politics does not refer to the study of the discipline of political science. It rather refers to the political processes and the persons responsible to conduct those processes. In a democratic polity like India elections are fundamentally important because through them alone the politicians can hope of capturing political power. Thus, if individual politicians or political parties as groups seek support from the criminals or the criminals themselves contest
elections then it is a definite indicator of criminalization of politics. Besides, there are various political institutions such as legislature, executive, judiciary, civil services, municipal corporations, municipalities, panchayat institutions, political parties, pressure groups, trade unions etc and there are hundreds of thousands of people to man those institutions. If these people themselves are criminals or they have rapport with criminals, this situation too can only be described as criminalization of politics. In short, the phenomenon of criminalization of politics can be defined in two ways. In the restricted sense it implies the direct participation of the criminals in the electoral process and consequently occupying the seats in Parliament or state legislatures. In the broader sense, the phenomenon connotes the participation of criminals in the political processes of India. It puts forward the involvement of criminals in the functioning of political parties by helping candidates either monetarily or with the help of criminal manpower, ensuring en bloc voting of all the members of the vote banks under their control, booth capturing, disrupting the campaign of rival candidates and in extreme cases killing the rival candidates. It is obvious that after elections, the criminals ask for their pound of flesh, demand various kinds of favours from the legislators and ministers who got elected with their support. It must also be pointed out that there are two major constituents that have their sway in the phenomenon of criminalization of politics. The first one is the muscle power. The involvement of organised criminals, the gangsters and mafia dons is a widespread attribute of India's political culture. No political party or
political organization today can claim that it keeps itself aloof from the use of muscle power. The fact is that the so-called popular leaders owe their existence as politicians because of the support of gangsters. Dharam Vira has made the following observation in a report of the National Police Commission in 1977: “The manner in which different political parties have functioned, particularly on the eve of periodic election, involves the free use of musclemen and 'Dadas' to influence the attitude and conduct of sizable sections of the electorate. The Panchayat elections, like other elections in the recent past, have demonstrated once again that there can be no sanity in India as long as politics continues to be based on Caste and muscle power.” The second constituent in criminalization of politics is money power. A democratic polity depends on periodic elections and elections involve huge expenditure. It is widely conceded even by the politicians that prohibitive electoral expenses breed corruption in Indian politics.

The process of criminalization of politics in India has had two phases. In the first phase the institutions got corrupted and in the second phase the corruption has been institutionalized. The corruption of institutions resulted in dishonest persons manning the institutions, bending rules, often paying no attention to the established norms and practices and invariably favouring unscrupulous people in return of monetary or other kinds of benefits. Institutionalization of corruption implies that nothing works in India save corrupt practices. Corruption, instead of being an aberration, has become a norm of Indian polity. This led to common people developing disdain for the
law. Thus, a great majority of Indians believe that they can get their work only through corrupt practices. The result is India emerging as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. The German NGO, Transparency International, in its Corruption Perception Index of 1998, ranked India 66 out of the 85 most corrupt countries.

Thus, while addressing to the issue of reasons of criminalization of Indian politics the first one that could be identified is the entry of post-independence generation into politics. For many of the young entrants, politics is just like a career which one opts for to make substantial material gains and enjoy tremendous prestige and power. As a sizeable number of leaders of today have such a mindset therefore, it is not surprising that political processes across the country have been criminalized. It is a matter of common knowledge that politics in India today is not the preferred area of activity of the bright, intelligent, selfless, committed young people with a burning desire to make their services available for the good of the country and the people. Instead, Indian politics in the present context largely attract the self-seekers, hooligans, thugs, rowdies, rapists and even murderers. It is not proper to single out any one political party or few political parties because all political parties are equally guilty of admitting persons of questionable background as members.

The second reason is to be found in the kind of party system India has opted for. It is technically known as multi-party system. However, in actual practice it seems to be a mockery of democracy. In India practically speaking, every
adult citizen is not only guaranteed the right to vote, to contest election and to hold public office but also has the right to float a political party of his own even if he cannot muster the support of five voters. It is true that the Election Commission follow certain guidelines to confer national or regional status on political parties but it has no power to contain or completely stop the mushrooming of political parties. Therefore, if the hardened criminals fail to get entry into mainstream political parties or if they are denied tickets to contest elections, they start their own political parties. As a result, the number of political parties joining the election fray has gone beyond manageable limits.

The government instituted a committee to investigate the nexus between criminals, bureaucracy and politicians. It was known as Vohra Committee. Its Chairman was the Union Home Secretary, N. N. Vohra while other members were the Secretary of RAW, Director of IB and Director of CBI. The Committee was assigned the task of investigating the nefarious activities of the crime syndicates and Mafia organisations and exposes the linkages between organised criminals and politicians and civil servants. It was also asked for making recommendation to deal with the menace of criminalization of politics

Another significant measure to make Indian polity corruption free and transparent was taken in the form of Right to Information Act of 2005. According to the Act it is mandatory on the part of government officials to provide the information to a person which he has asked for within a
specific timeframe. In case the officials concerned fail to do it, they are in for punishment. This is one concrete measure that the United Progressive Alliance government (UPA-I) has taken to make the governance accountable and transparent. It has proved to be useful in varied ways as nowadays a number of corrupt practices, cases of embezzlement, nepotism, discrimination, major scams involving senior ministers and government officials are being reported because of RTI. It also serves as a deterrent law because the ministers and bureaucrats are currently wary of misusing their powers and positions for the fear of being exposed.

Criminalization of politics is an all pervading and extremely dangerous phenomenon of contemporary politics in India. If it is not urgently curbed it would permanently damage the institution of democracy. The menace of criminalization of politics can be defined in two ways. One, when the criminals directly participate in the electoral process to become legislators. Two, when the criminals get involved in political processes by helping parties and candidates with their money and muscle power. There are various reasons of criminalization of politics in India. Some of them can be identified as: one, for the post-independence generation politics has become a money making vocation; two, the multi-party system that prevails in the country; three, the lure of money that led our politicians to get involved in crime and with criminals; four, transformation of criminals from the supporters of politicians to politicians; five, major problems of India such as poverty, illiteracy, Caste-based politics,
communalism and so on give a further push to the menace of criminalization of politics; six, absence of ethical values in Indian political system; seven, loopholes in the functioning of investigative and judicial agencies, eighth, the rising trend of coalition politics; and lastly a weak civil society. The government has taken certain measures to curb the phenomenon of criminalization of politics. However, those measures are far from satisfactory. A lot must be done to keep criminals out of the fields of politics and governance.

ETHNIC AND LINGUISTIC ISSUES

Ethnic issues and conflict is a tragic invariable of human history and still it is very much existing in the present scenario. International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences defines ethnic group as ‘a distinct category of the population in a larger society whose culture is usually different from its own. The members of such a group are, or feel themselves, or are thought to be, bound together by common ties of race or nationality or culture’ According to Horowitz (1985), all conflicts are based on ascriptive (birth-based) group identities, real or imagined—race, language, religion, tribe, or caste—can be called ethnic.

India is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-linguistic country where national unity is given priority. Different ethnic groups have been asserting their ethnic rights and privileges through different types of movements. The North Eastern part India is mired in ethnic conflict. Such conflicts have not only disturbed the peace and tranquility in the region but have also violated all norms of humanity by
perpetuating brutal atrocities and violence upon innocent people. Such violence has led to the loss of lives of innumerable people and destruction of property worth crores of rupees.. Conflict between Nagas and Kukis, Bodos and Adivasis, Assamese and Bengali are few examples. Tripura, Aranachal Pradesh and Mizoram have faced the problem of Chakma refugees.

**Movement in Tamil Nadu**

The regional movement in Tamil Nadu can be understood by the analysis of its socio-cultural and historical dimensions. The movement in Tamil Nadu has been generally looked upon as a socio-religious revolt against the domination of the Aryan culture. In fact, this movement was projected as a conflict between two ethnic groups, the Aryans of the North and the Dravidians of the South. This two-race theory, if it can be called that, has resulted in the Tamilisation of politics (in Tamil Nadu). The supporters of the Dravidian movement consider Hinduism as foreign to their way of life. This definition of Hinduism has far-reaching political implications. This has certainly affected the foundations of political unity in India. The socio-cultural domination of the Brahmins has contributed to quite an extent to the growth of this separate identity consciousness.

The Dravidian movement could be traced to the formation of the Dravidian Association in 1915. Subsequently, this Association was changed into the South Indian Peoples Association, which demanded the creation of a Dravidian State. In 1917, this association was again changed into South
Indian Liberal Federation and came to be popularly known as 'Justice Party'. The Justice Party was in favour of continuation of the British rule in India for it viewed it as a divine dispensation. In 1937, a Congress government was formed in Madras under the leadership of C. Rajagopalachari. His government's introduction of Hindi as a compulsory subject was opposed by the supporters of the Dravidian movement. The movement took such a violent turn that the government was forced to revise its decision and Hindi was made an optional subject. E.V. Ramaswami Naicker was elected as the President of the Justice Party. This party demanded a separate Dravidian state 'directly under the Secretary of State for India'. Justice Party even supported the Muslim League's demand for the creation of Pakistan. In 1944, the party became the Dravida Kazagham. Naicker declared, 'a Hindu in the present concept may be a Dravidian, but a Dravidian in the real sense of the term cannot and shall not be a Hindu'.

With the formation of the Andhra Pradesh in 1956, the name of Madras was changed to Tamil Nadu. In 1967, the DMK secured absolute majority in the state assembly. Since then, it has been consistently opposing the imposition of Hindi and alternately, the retention of English as the official language indefinitely. It has also been demanding more autonomy for the state and limitation of the role of the Planning Commission.

The Tamilnadu government appointed the Raja Mannar Committee in 1971 to suggest improvements in the centre-state relations. The Committee's recommendations for the
reorganisation of the Planning Commission, 'barest minimum' of the Concurrent List and removal of the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, except in cases involving interpretation of the Constitution, was understandably not accepted by the Government of India. In 1972, the DMK was divided into two factions, the DMK and the AIADMK. The Dravidian movement is now more concerned with maintenance and continuation of what is normally referred to as the Tamil identity. Some critics are of the opinion that 'It is a revolt against the centre and the sum total of centre's policies which seek to perpetuate the midland's domination of the coastlands'.

**Telengana Movement**

Regarding the political and other problems of the Telengana region, the States Reorganisation Commission was of the opinion that it will be in the interest of both Andhra and Telengana, if Telengana is carved out as a separate state. However, a 'Gentleman's Agreement' reached between the leaders of Andhra and Telengana made the latter a part of Andhra Pradesh. Under this agreement, the people of Telengana region in the state Assembly were to form a Regional Committee to deal with matters concerning their region. The entire revenue from this region was to be spent for the development of the area concerned and recruitments to certain posts were to be made from among Telengana people only. Besides either a Chief Minister or a Deputy Chief Minister was to be made from among the Telengana inhabitants.

Several factors have contributed to the development of a
feeling of sub-regionalism in the Telengana region. Factors such as cultural, historical and economic ones have added a new dimension to what should be called politics of the language. Different 'attitudinal sub cultures' between the people of Andhra and Telengana are a result of these factors. Forrester says, "Historical and economic factors produce sub-regional problems and encourage the growth of compelling political sub-cultures".

The Telengana agitation of 1969 was against economic exploitation and political domination of the people of Andhra over that of Telengana. The agitation was more aggravated by the intra-Congress politics of the state. The dissident Congress leaders under the leadership of Chenna Reddy converted the Telengana Praja Samithi into a mass movement.

The judgement of the Supreme Court in 1972 upholding the Mulki rules for the Telengana region sparked off an agitation in the Andhra region. Andhra wanted 'the elimination of all concessions, root and branch' while the Telengana NGOs demanded full implementation of the Mulki rules. The resignation of the ministers from the Andhra region resulted in the proclamation of the President's rule in the state. Ultimately, a six-point formula was arrived at to please both the factions of the state. Thus, it is seen that the acceptance of the principle of linguistic states has led to a situation that has often been considered as detrimental to the growth of national economic planning.

Maharashtra Movement

The Shiv Sena under the leadership of Bal Thackeray has
been behind the movement of Maharashtra for the Maharashtrians since 1966. This movement is often described by some commentators as the 'crystallisation of a sub-nationalism forged by the primordial sentiments of language and religion'. As a militant pressure group, the Shiv Sena has been quite successful in appealing to the regional consciousness among the Maharashtrians. It is demanding a programme of social and economic transformation for the people of Maharashtra. Unless the 'Sons of the Soil Theory' is successfully met by economic programmes and political and social movements, this theory might create a situation where ethnocentric feelings might ultimately result in the fragmentation of the very framework of national integration. Myron Weiner observes, 'inter-state migration in India has created a new tension in the complex relationship that exists between modernisation and integration. So long as the sense of regional identity was not well articulated, Indians were generally disposed to be tolerant towards, or more often indifferent to those individuals speaking other languages and subscribing to other cultural traditions who entered their states to work and settle'.

The Maha Vidarbha Movement in Maharashtra is demanding a separate state for the Vidarbha region. They are protesting against the step-motherly treatment to their region by the Maharashtra State. In fact, their demand for a separate State has arisen from the economic backwardness of this region. In 1968, forty five members of parliament belonging to the various political parties submitted a memorandum to the
Prime Minister demanding a referendum for a separate Vidarbha State.

**Jharkhand Movement**

The demand for a Jharkhand state consisting of tribal dominated areas of Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh was put before the States Reorganisation Commission. The Commission while conceding the setting up of a Special Development Board for the districts of Chhotanagpur and Santhal Parganas, rejected the demand for a separate statehood. The Jharkhand state was to consist of seven districts of south Bihar, three districts of northern Orissa, two districts of Madhya Pradesh and some areas of West Bengal. The supporters of this movement argue that the people belonging to this area have not only cultural, geographical and historical linkages, they also consist of one-fourth of the total tribal population of India.

This movement could be traced back to the Birsa Munda Movement of the late 1890s. Three factors such as administrative unity of the region, exploitation of the resources and the people of this region by the outsiders, and the ethnic differences between the people of Jharkhand and the other areas have contributed to the success of the movement. The non induction of the tribal population into the regional development programmes has also aggravated the situation. A number of organisations such as Birsa Seva Dal, Jharkhand Morcha and Jharkhand Mukti Andolan have injected a new spirit into the Jharkhand Movement. The differences between non-Christian tribals and Christian tribals, micro-identification
of the leaders with their own tribe and administrative, economic and political opposition to the movement notwithstanding, the Jharkhand movement even now poses a serious threat to the development of an integrated political culture of the region.

The Assamese Movement

The linguistic movements in Assam became prominent in the 1960s and then in 1972. The introduction of Assamese as the official language of the state sparked off anti-Bengali riots throughout the Brahmaputra valley. This movement was led by the All Assam Students Union when the Assam Assembly unanimously passed a resolution to establish a separate university for the Bengali-speaking Cachar district in 1972; it was opposed by the AASU. They criticised the Assam Assembly for 'failing to give due recognition to the Assamese language'. They declared that this resolution would 'endanger' the existence of Assam and the Assamese people. The Assamese Government's policy of conceding to the demands of the AASU was opposed by the Bengali population of the state. It was also criticised by the Bodo agitationists.

Since mid-seventies, the Bodo agitation has taken a serious turn. The Bodos opposed the policy of Assamisation. Since 1979, the AASU has been more concerned about the migrants from other Indian states and from outside the country.

An official report of the Government of India for 1980-81 acknowledged the serious apprehensions of the people of Assam. The Assamese have been assured that 'their social, cultural and linguistic identity shall be preserved'.

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Various sub-national groups have raised their heads against the Assamisation policy. No solution has, as yet, been found for resolving the Bodo agitation aimed at a separate state. It could be safely argued that most of the problems in Assam, like other regional movements, are there because of wrong administrative and economic policies of the government.

**Punjab Movement**

The demand for a Sikh State was officially adopted by the Akali Dal in 1946. Its resolution demanded 'the preservation and protection of the religious, cultural and economic and political rights of the Sikh nation and the creation of a Sikh State'. The Cabinet Mission rejected all proposals aimed at the division of India. It, however, suggested a confederation type of constitutional system. The Viceroy was not prepared to accept the demand for an independent Sikh State within the Commonwealth.

The Sikh leaders demanded a province to safeguard their cultural and social traditions within the framework of the Indian federation. Punjab was declared a bilingual State under the Sachar formula. This formula emphasised both Punjabi and Hindi as medium of instruction. This was also appreciated by the Sikh community. The role of the Hindu communal organisations, at this stage, was mainly responsible for aggravating the demands for the Punjabi Suba. These organisations asked the Hindus of Punjab to declare Hindi as their mother tongue, although at home, they converse in Punjabi.
The Akalis put their demand for a Punjabi Suba before the States Reorganisation Commission. During the fifties, there were confrontations between the Akalis and the various Hindu organisations demanding Punjabi Suba and Maha Punjab respectively. It was the only State where the demand for a Punjabi speaking state was opposed by large sections of the population, which spoke the Punjabi language. According to the Commission, “The problem of language in the Punjab is primarily one of the scripts and in this battle of scripts, sentiment is arrayed against sentiment'. The SRC ultimately rejected the demand for a Punjabi Suba. This report was considered as a 'decree of Sikh annihilation'. Sardar Hukam Singh, who later became the speaker of the Lok Sabha, observed on 17 December 1955 in the Lok Sabha “Our case has never been considered on merit. There was always that lurking suspicion in the minds of our leaders and subsequently, in the minds of our countrymen also that perhaps we are not loyal to this country. We have some evil designs and we have some truck with some foreign power”. Reacting to the demand for the Punjabi Suba, the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru declared on the floor of the Lok Sabha that such a demand, even if made on the language basis, would be a communal demand.

Reacting to the demands of the Akali Dal in 1965, a few days before the Indo-Pak war, the Government of India appointed a cabinet Sub-committee to consider the question of Punjabi Saba. The Sub-committee was in favour of a change of boundary in Punjab on a linguistic basis. The Congress
Working Committee passed a resolution in support of a Punjabi speaking state in 1966. Accordingly, the state was reorganised on 1st November 1966. However, the exclusion of Chandigarh and certain other Punjabi speaking areas of the state became the bone of contention in the post-1966 period.

After the death of Master Tara Singh, a small fraction of the Akali Dal demanded a sovereign independent state. Throughout 1970s, Punjab was comparatively free from any language agitation. The present phase of the Sikh agitation is linked with the Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1973. This was endorsed by the Akali Dal in 1978. This resolution emphasised that besides Defence, Foreign Affairs, Communications and Currency, the power to legislate vis-a-vis rest of the subjects (departments) should rest exclusively with Punjab. It should have right to frame its own constitution. It revived the separate nation theory. The other aspects of the resolution were regarding centre-state relations, transfer of Chandigarh, allotment of river waters of Punjab and enactment of an All India Gurudwara Act. The situation in Punjab still continues to be highly fluid and volatile.

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Social movements have broadly been perceived as ‘organised’ or ‘collective effort’ to bring about changes in the thought, beliefs, values, attitudes, relationships and major institutions in society or to resist any change in the above societal arrangements. Blumer defines social movements as ‘collective enterprises to establish a new social order of life’. Social movement is an ‘effort by a large number of people to
solve collectively a problem they feel they have in common’. According to Haberle, it is ‘a collective attempt to bring about a change in certain social institutions or to create entirely a new order’.

**Elements of Social Movements**

Ideology, collective mobilisation, organization, leadership, interest articulation and identity formation are considered to be vital elements of social movements and are closely interrelated. Ideology provides a broad frame of action and collective mobilisation in the social movement. Collective mobilization is again a central element of a social movement. The nature and direction of a social movement is widely shaped by the nature of collective mobilisation.

Collective mobilisation may be radical, non-institutionalized, spontaneous, large scale or it may be non-violent, institutionalized, sporadic, restricted. It may also undergo a process of transformation from radical to reformative or institutionalized.

Leadership and organization are closely linked to the process of collective mobilisation. A leader can be charismatic figure or a democratically elected one. The organization provides an identified structure to social movements.

Interest articulation is an important aspect of social movement that is usually done by the leadership and the organization. They are not only to articulate the interests and the concerns of the movement participants but also to unite members based on these achievable interests.
Social movements form solidarity among the movement participants and bring new meaning for it by constructing a common identity. The common identity may be diverted against the others, that is the movement opponents, and is supported by the participants, and the sympathizers.

**New Social Movements**

Social movements are integral parts of social change and transformation. These are parts of social processes. **New Social moment is the product of post Industrial society. Old social movement was class-based. It includes some recognizable class, for example, working class, peasantry class and so on. They functioned within the frame of political parties. The new social movements and experiments manifest the true nature of contemporary world crisis and prepare for a future desirable society. The role of these people's movements and experiments transcends not only state power, but also the new existing civil societies. They work to transform the state itself to become more humane and responsive to the sufferings. The moral vision of the new movements is significant. By highlighting the question of ecology, health, gender etc., which were earlier considered as peripheral, the new movements have a valuable role to play in enlarging the scope of lower class movement.**

**Democracy and New Social Movements**

The relationship among state, democracy and social movements is increasingly visible in the world. The formation of state from its early Greek state to modern state has been
possible due to the changing intervention of democracy in the world. The democratic state facilitates greater political participation, political discussion, free assembly, political factions, etc, thereby contributing to the formation of political movements. The state and its policies and programmes also shape, reshape, encourage, discourage and transform the process of social movements. The collective action in forms of mass politics, mass movement and social movements normally leads the states toward democratisation. According to Tilly, “The undemocratic regimes witness the civil wars whereas the democratic regimes tolerate social movements”.

The political dynamics of Indian democracy has brought a significant social transformation among Indian citizens. The Indian democracy could inculcate democratic sense of law-abiding, self-disciplined and social and moral responsibilities among its citizens at present. The democratic rules of law, constitutional safeguards, statutory commissions, political rights, legal rights, etc, have been challenging the primordial social order of Indian society. The hierarchical society traditionally based on the ritual purity and pollution has been debunked and demystified to a large extent in modern India. Indian democratic regime over the decades has matured enough to handle Caste-based stigma, gender stereotypes and tribal isolation. The horizontal competition among the Castes could weaken the vertical Caste solidarity in the countryside since long. The combined opposition of dalit, women, and tribal and minority voters is increasingly becoming evident in all types of elections. From political campaign to political
participation, from developing a common platform to forming responsible government, these groups have been increasingly asserting their presence.

**ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS**

The environmental movements in India were of special significance in the history of new social movements in India. The movements were addressing novel issues like environmental degradation. The movements were massive with the active participation of marginalized groups. The demands of the new movements were novel in the sense that it demanded right to livelihood and rights of displaced. The environmental movements adapted non-violent strategy. The movements incorporated hitherto unrepresented sectors of society including adivasis, women and the marginalized. Many of the new environmental movements forced the governments to take affirmative policies in the form of new laws and provisions.

1. **Chipko Movement**

   It is an environment protection movement took place in Chamoli district and later at Tehri-Garhwal district of Uttarakhand under the leadership of Sundarlal Bahuguna, Gaura Devi, Sudesha Devi, Bachni Devi, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Govind Singh Rawat, Dhoom Singh Negi, Shamsher Singh Bisht and Ghanasyam Raturi. The objective of the movement was to protect the trees on the Himalayan slopes from the axes of contractors of the forest. Mr. Bahuguna enlightened the villagers by conveying the importance of trees in the
environment which checks the erosion of soil, cause rains and provides pure air. The women of Advani village of Tehri-Garhwal tied the sacred thread around trunks of trees and they hugged the trees, hence it was called ‘Chipko Movement’ or ‘hug the tree movement’. The main demand of the people in these protests was that the benefits of the forests (especially the right to fodder) should go to local people. The Chipko movement gathered momentum in 1978 when the women faced police firings and other tortures. The then state Chief Minister, Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna set up a committee to look into the matter, which eventually ruled in favor of the villagers. This became a turning point in the history of eco-development struggles in the region and around the world.

2. **Save Silent Valley Movement**

The Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) proposed a hydroelectric dam across the Kunthipuzha River that runs through Silent Valley. In February 1973, the Planning Commission approved the project at a cost of about Rs 25 crores. Many feared that the project would submerge 8.3 sq km of untouched moist evergreen forest. Several NGOs strongly opposed the project and urged the government to abandon it. In January 1981, bowing to unrelenting public pressure, Indira Gandhi declared that Silent Valley will be protected. In June 1983 the Center re-examined the issue through a commission chaired by Prof. M.G.K. Menon. In November 1983 the Silent Valley Hydroelectric Project was called off. In 1985, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi formally inaugurated the Silent Valley National Park.
3. **Appiko Movement**

It can be said that Appiko movement is the southern version of the Chipko movement. The Appiko Movement was locally known as “Appiko Chaluvali”. The locals embraced the trees which were to be cut by contractors of the forest department. The Appiko movement used various techniques to raise awareness such as foot marches in the interior forest, slide shows, folk dances, street plays etc. The second area of the movement’s work was to promote afforestation on denuded lands. The movement later focused on the rational use of ecosphere through introducing alternative energy resource to reduce pressure on the forest. The movement became a success. The current status of the project is – stopped.

4. **Narmada Bachao Andholan (NBA)**

The movement first started as a protest for not providing proper rehabilitation and resettlement for the people who have been displaced by the construction of Sardar Sarovar Dam. Later on, the movement turned its focus on the preservation of the environment and the eco-systems of the valley. Activists also demanded the height of the dam to be reduced to 88 m from the proposed height of 130m. World Bank withdrew from the project.

The environmental issue was taken into court. In October 2000, the Supreme Court gave a judgment approving the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam with a condition that height of the dam could be raised to 90 m. This height is much higher than the 88 m which anti-dam activists demanded, but it
is definitely lower than the proposed height of 130 m. The project is now largely financed by the state governments and market borrowings. The project is expected to be fully completed by 2025. Although not successful, as the dam could not be prevented, the NBA has created an anti-big dam opinion in India and outside. It questioned the paradigm of development. As a democratic movement, it followed the Gandhian way 100 per cent.

5. Tehri Dam Conflict

Tehri dam attracted national attention in the 1980s and the 1990s. The major objections include seismic sensitivity of the region, submergence of forest areas along with Tehri town etc. Despite the support from other prominent leaders like Sunderlal Bahuguna, the movement has failed to gather enough popular support at national as well as international levels.

DALIT MOVEMENTS

The Dalit movement in India began around the mid-19th century. It was Jyotirao Phule, a middle caste, social revolutionary from Maharashtra, who questioned the caste system itself and its evil practices. By the end of the 19th century, there were a number of anti-caste movements in various parts of India. This includes Phule’s Satyashodhak movement, Namashudra movement, the Adi-Hindu movement, the Adi Dharma movement, the Ezahava movement of Sree Narayan Dharma Paripalana [SNDP] Yogam, the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Samajam [SJPS] and the Pulaya Mahasabha.
Causes for Dalit movement:

- It is the result of the constant hatred being generated from centuries from the barbaric activities of the upper castes of India.
- They were deprived of higher training of mind and were denied social-economic and political status.
- The division of labour led to their inequality and exploitation.
- The caste system degenerated Dalit life into pathogenic condition where occupations changed into castes.
- For centuries, Dalits were excluded from the mainstream society and were only allowed to pursue menial occupations.
- They were pushed to the outer areas of villages whereas the mainland was occupied by the upper castes.
- Many of the atrocities were committed in the name of religion like system of Devadasi, pouring of molten lead into the ears of a Dalit who happened to listen to some mantra.
- To retain the stronghold on people, education was monopolized.
- This made the Dalits rise and protest against the inhuman practices demand for basic rights of equality.
- With the introduction of western language, and with the influence of the Christian missionaries, the Dalits began to
come across the ideals of equality and liberty and thus began the Dalit Movement in modern times.

- Educated Dalits began to talk about the problems of the poor and about exploitation and humiliations from the upper castes.
- They also got a fillip through British policy of divide and rule.
- Improved communication network, new system of education, new administrative system, rule of law threw open equal opportunities for all dismantling social barriers.

**Dalit Panthers Movement:**

Dalit Panthers is a social organization founded by Namdev Dhasal in April 1972 in Mumbai. It was inspired by Black Panther Party, a revolutionary movement amongst African-Americans, which emerged in the United States and functioned from 1966-1982. They called themselves “Panthers” because they were supposed to fight for their rights like panthers and not get suppressed by the strength and might of their oppressors. The members were young men belonging to Neo-Buddhists and Scheduled Castes. The controversy over the article “Kala Swatantrata Din” (Black Independence Day) by Dhale which was published in “Sadhana” in 1972 created a great sensation and publicised the Dalit Panthers through Maharashtra. Many Panther branches sprang up spontaneously in parts of Maharashtra. The movement was a radical departure from earlier Dalit movements as its initial thrust on militancy
through the use of rustic arms and threats, gave the movement a revolutionary colour. They linked their struggles to the struggles of all oppressed people over the globe. The clear cut leftist stand reflected by this document ran counter to the accepted legacy of Ambedkar as projected. The Naxalite movement saw a potential ally in the Panthers and tried to forge a bond right at the level of formulation of policies and programmes of the latter. The Panthers’ militancy by and large remained confined to their speeches and writings.

**Role of Kanshi Ram in Bahujan politics**

In 1971 Kansiram quit his job in DRDO and together with his colleagues established the SCs, STs, OBCs and Minorities Employees Welfare Association. Through this association, attempts were made to look into the problems and harassment of the above-mentioned employees and bring out an effective solution for the same. Another main objective was to educate and create awareness about the Caste system. In 1973, Kanshi Ram again with his colleagues established the BAMCEF: Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation. The first operating office was opened in Delhi in 1976 with the motto – “Educate Organize and Agitate“. This served as a base to spread the ideas of Ambedkar and his beliefs. In 1980 he created a road show named “Ambedkar Mela” which showed the life of Ambedkar and his views through pictures and narrations. In 1981 he founded the Dalit Soshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS4) to fight against the attacks on the workers who were spreading awareness on the Caste system. In 1984, he established a full-fledged political party known as
the Bahujan Samaj Party. Later he converted to Buddhism. The ‘Bahujan’ identity encompassed all the SCs, STs, BCs, OBCs and religious minorities than ‘dalit’, which practically represented only the scheduled Castes. The obsession with capturing power robbed him of certain fundamental values that Ambedkar never compromised. Ambedkar pointed at capitalism and Brahminism as the twin enemies for his movement but Kanshiram enthusiastically embraced them.

**Dalit literary movement:**

Given that the Brahmins would never allow the Dalits’ voice to be expressed, the Dalits began their own magazine and began to express their own experiences. With the formation of the Dalit Panthers, a series of Dalit poetry and stories depicting the miseries of the Dalits were released. All these literature argued that Dalit Movement fights not only against the Brahmins but all those people whoever practices exploitation. New revolutionary songs, poems, stories and autobiographies were written by Dalit writers. Educated Dalit and intellectuals explained to the other illiterate brothers about the required change in the society. Dalit literature tried to compare the past situation of Dalits to the present and future generation not to create hatred, but to make them aware of their pitiable condition.

**Adivasi Land Struggles in Kerala:**

The Adivasis in Kerala, mostly inhabiting the mountains of the Western Ghats, constitute around one percent of the total population, while the Dalits form about 9 percent.
Marginalized and oppressed by social and economic factors, the Adivasis have never been the real beneficiaries of the government schemes implemented to reduce landlessness among them. Instead, they have been deprived of their customary rights over their natural resources and traditional knowledge systems, leading to several struggles for land across a timeframe of several decades. Some of the key struggles are listed below:

**Adivasi Land Struggles in Kannur**

The Adivasi land struggles in Kannur (a district located in the northern part of Kerala) that began in 1999 were led by Adivasi Vimochana Munnani, an Adivasi organisation at the forefront of several land movements in Kerala. The movement was started by 9 landless Adivasi families who occupied 9.25 acres of land in Thiruvonappuram in the Peravoor region of Kannur. They encroached into the land as a result of the Government of Kerala capturing it to implement the Kerala Land Reforms Act, 1970. On December 22, 1999 representatives of Adivasi, Dalit and several other organizations took part in a convention held in Peravoor. During the convention a formal resolution was passed for a land seizure movement whereby, the protestors would attempt to recapture surplus land, reserve forest land, government project lands and lands of large landowners. However, recently, the AVM’s orientation towards the revolutionary people’s movement in Kerala has come under the scanner of the Home Ministry of India. The Central Government had in fact sent a watch-list to the State Government to closely
observe their activities. AVM’s name also appeared in that list and now, their activities are being closely monitored by the State Government and the police.

**Muthanga Land Struggle**

In 2001, the shocking death of 32 Adivasis from starvation forced the Adivasis in Wayanad to renew their struggle for land. One of the reasons cited for the starvation deaths among the Adivasis was the lack of land for cultivation. Resultantly, a new organization - the Adivasi Gothra Maha Sabha (AGMS) was formed. On August 30, 2001 the agitators gathered in the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram and began a campaign with the slogan “Right to live in the land one is born.” After several weeks of protest, a seven-point agreement was reached with the then Chief Minister, AK Anthony, who promised to give 5 acres of land to each Adivasi family. Even after 45 days, when the government failed to abide by the agreement, AGMS protestors encroached into the Muthunga Wildlife Sanctuary in Wayanad on January 5, 2003. The government didn’t pay any attention to the protesters until February 17, 2003, when a large contingent of police forces entered the forest and began evicting the protesters violently without any warning. In the ensuing battle, several hundred tribals were injured, one Adivasi was killed and a policeman died. Such criminal injustice and brutality by the police had been unheard of in Kerala’s recent history. Thus, a mammoth struggle that began with a long pending demand for the Adivasis’ right to land became a short one that lived for only 44 days, brutally suppressed and brought to a halt using police force.
Although the Muthanga land struggle has completed a decade, the AGMS continues to lead many other land struggles across the state. The Adivasis’ dream of regaining their land turned out to be a horrid experience, as many of them who took part in the struggle were falsely accused in several cases. For the past eleven years, many of them have been trekking once in every month to Kochi, for the routine hearings in various cases. Acute poverty and joblessness have reduced them to skeletons and have paralysed their morals. Out of the more than 70 accused in many cases, 22 have already died. Meanwhile, the court cases drag on and on without any meaningful end in sight.

Aralam Farm Protest

With the rising demands of the tribals for their rightful land, the Kerala Government signed an agreement with the State Farms Cooperation of India in June, 2004 to use the 3,060 hectares of the Central State Farm in Aralam for the resettlement of the Adivasis. The rehabilitation process was to incorporate the tribals of Kannur and Wayanad districts into the project. However, in 2006, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) came up with the plan of establishing an ecotourism project on the farm to exploit it for tourism purposes. It also decided to exclude the Adivasis from Wayanad district from the rehabilitation agreement. The delay in the process of rehabilitation and the exclusion of the tribals from Wayanad instigated a fresh movement by the Adivasis. Thousands of Adivasis encroached into the farmlands and stated living there, which put the State Government under pressure to start the
process of distribution of title deeds. The rehabilitation plan promised each eligible family one acre of land, along with basic facilities like drinking water, roads, transportation, schools and electricity. But even after two years, the promise of basic facilities remained unfulfilled and led to the death of 14 people in the farm. The government’s offer to provide employment also saw no progress. Today, the community’s primary demand is five acres as alternate land and the inclusion of Adivasi areas in Kerala in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution. But, the Government does not seem to be very keen to alleviate the pains of the struggling Adivasis in the Farm.

Chengara Land Struggle

The agitation at Chengara in Pathanamthitta district began on August 4, 2007, when 300 families from various parts of the state converged on the rubber estate owned by Harrison Malayalam Plantations Ltd. The agitators alleged that the company was in possession of much more land than the actual extent under the government’s lease. Their demand was five acres of land for cultivation (later reduced to one acre) and Rs 50,000 as financial assistance per family. During the more than two-year long protest, lack of food, scarcity of water, absence of medical facilities and hostile weather conditions led to the death of 13 people. After 790 grueling days, the agitation was settled during a discussion between the then Chief Minister, V S Achutanandan, Laha Gopalan (leader of the Chengara Land Struggle) and others of the Sadhu Jana Vimochana Samyukta Vedi (SJVSV) – the organization that led the land struggle.
Oommen Chandy, who was then the Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala State Assembly, also participated in the talks. As a part of the settlement, 1,432 out of the 1,738 families that had started living on the rubber plantation were enlisted for receiving financial assistance to build houses. However, the distribution of land amongst the various tribes and Castes was uneven. Some received one acre of land, while others received only 25 cents. The SJVSV also alleged that the Chengara Package had been accepted under pressure, as CPI (M) leaders had been intimidating and paying off their activists. Despite bitter allegations of betrayal and conspiracy by the ruling and opposition parties, the Chengara land struggle was a success.

Arippa Bhoosamaram

In 2009, the Kerala Government decided to set aside 21.54 acres of the 90 acre Arippa Revenue Forest in Kulathupuzha village for the beneficiaries of the Chengara Package. The remaining 68.46 acres was kept aside for institutional development. On December 31, 2012 around 1,300 Adivasis, Dalits and landless poor encroached into the remaining land in Arippa Forest and began their protest by building shanties and living there. The protestors claimed that a part of the forest was surplus revenue land meant for redistribution among the landless tribals. Under the banner of Adivasi Dalit Munetta Samiti (ADMS), the agitators raised the slogan “We do not want 3 cents of land; all we want is land for cultivation.” Among the protesters were people who had taken part in the historic Chengara land struggle and were given title deeds, but found themselves cheated, when they realized that
the land allotted to them was neither fit for cultivation nor was it suitable for habitation. After one and a half year of relentless struggle, a discussion was called by the Chief Minister of Kerala with the representatives of the Adivasis and the Dalits protesting in Arippa, which ended without reaching any final decisions. The suggestion by the Chief Minister, Oommen Chandy, to give 3 cents of land to each protester was summarily rejected by the representatives. At the moment, the protesters are living in the Arippa Forest in shanties to press their demand of land for cultivation.

Apart from these large struggles, there were also many small-scale protests across Kerala that continue even today.

**Puyamkutti Land Struggle**

Some 218 Adivasi families had been residing in the 939 acres of the Uriyampetty forests in Puyamkutti. In order to evacuate the Adivasis from the biodiversity rich forests in the Western Ghats, the State Government made an agreement with them that in place of the forest land, the Adivasis would be given financial assistance and fertile land for agriculture. However, the promised 545 acres of land meant for Adivasi rehabilitation actually is in the possession of Kerala Forest Department, which does not want to let go off the prime land. To get their right due of land and proper rehabilitation packages, the Adivasis came down to the streets of the Kochi District Collectorate and began their protests. The Adivasis have been caught in the infinite loop of bureaucratic procedures, and the inaction of the government has invigorated them into strengthening their protests.
Adivasi Welfare Forum (AWF)

The Adivasi Welfare Forum in Kerala has been undertaking a relay protest strike in Pottanachira for land for the Adivasis. In 2002, protestors encroached into the Jersey Farm in Pottanachira demanding land titles for 24 acres of excess land in the farm. When the LDF government did not pay heed to the agitators, the protest slowly died down. However, the district Panchayat’s decision to convert the 24 acres of land into a high-tech farm caused the AWF to renew its protests. On January 25, 2013, when the Deputy Collector came to the farm to collect evidence, the AWF protested by erecting more shanties at the farm site. Currently, while the Adivasis are fighting for land, the villagers and farm employees have begun a counter protest at the farm junction.

Perinchamkutty Land Struggle

On February 10, 2012 a batch of government officials arrived at the Perinchamkutty Adivasi Colony with a mighty police force, and proceeded to mercilessly beat up the residents and to forcefully evacuate them from their huts. 62 Adivasis of all ages and genders were arrested and imprisoned. The government’s reasoning for the violent evictions was “illegal encroachment into government land”. The Adivasis were released months later, and in protest against the wrongful eviction, they gathered in front of the District Collectorate on October 1, 2012 and began a non-violent, indefinite protest. Under the direction of the Adivasi Bhoomi Avakasa Samyukta Samiti (ABASS), they submitted a list of the landless Adivasis residing in Perinchamkutty. Accordingly, the District Collector
of Idukki selected 161 Adivasis for the land distribution scheme and promised to allot an acre of land to each family. However, in the last two years, the government has not met with its promise. So far, 7 people have died in the struggle to reclaim their lands, but the government has still not reached a consensus on rehabilitating these innocent people. Meanwhile, the protesting Adivasis have reiterated their demand for land and have decided to intensify their struggle till they achieve their aim.

WOMEN MOVEMENTS

Parallel to the practices of exclusion and violence against women, India evokes an animated history of movements and protest. It is said that women's movements are among the most important crusade of modern social movements.

Women's participation in movements has been in four major forms:

1. For social, economic and political rights of specific categories of people like tribal, peasants and industrial workers.
2. For improvement in conditions of work and autonomy to women.
3. For equal remuneration for work.

Women were more aware after independence. Groups of
women would go from village to village, enter liquor dens and destroy liquor pots and containers. If any woman reported to be of physical abuse by her husband, all other women would surround him, beat him up and force him to apologize to his wife in public. The formation of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was undoubtedly the first attempt made to form a Trade Union attached to the Textile Labor Union in Ahmadabad. It was formed in 1972 at the initiative of Ela Bhatt, and was an organization of women who were involved in different trades, but shared a number of common features and work experiences, low earnings, extremely poor working, harassment from those in authority, and lack of recognition of their efforts as socially useful work.

Major objective of SEWA is to improve the working conditions of women through a process of training, technical aid, legal literacy, collective bargaining, and to teach values of honesty, dignity and simplicity, the Gandhian goals to which SEWA subscribes. The anti-price rise agitations in Maharashtra were the direct result of the drought and famine conditions that affected rural Maharashtra in the early 1970s. These led to a sharp price rise in urban Maharashtra. In 1973, the United Women's Anti-Price Rise Front was formed to mobilize women against inflation.

There was mass women's movement for consumer protection and the demand was for the government to fix minimum prices and to distribute essential commodities. Large groups of women, between 10,000 and 20,000, would hold demonstrations at government offices, houses of Members of
Parliament and merchants, and those who could not get out of their homes would express their support by beating thalis (metal plates) with lathis or belans (rolling pins). This movement spread to Gujarat, where it was called the Nav Nirman movement. In Gujarat, the movement started as a student's movement against spiralling costs, corruption and black marketeering. Soon, it became a great middleclass movement and thousands of women joined it. The methods included mock courts where judgments were passed on corrupt state officials and politicians, mock funeral processions, and processions to greet the dawn of a new era.

Women started participating in increasing numbers in the Naxalbari movement in West Bengal and the Naxalite movement in Andhra Pradesh, the Navnirman youth movement in Gujarat, and the Chipko Movement. The Shramik Mahila Sangathan (Working Women's Organization), the Progressive Organization of Women, and the Mahila Samata Sainik Dal (League of Women Soldiers for Equality) were some of the organizations that emerged during this period.

Significant landmark for the liberation of women empowerment is mainly because of the U N consideration against maltreatments of women, UNO declared international women's decade (1975-1985), this declaration gave women a new trend in their viewpoint, and Indian women were influenced by this declaration and changed their perspective in movement.

One of the important movements was Anti Rape
movement: Women's rights movement in India gained a national appeal with an anti-rape movement in 1980. Its origin lay in the excesses committed by the state repressive machinery during the Emergency Rule in India from 1975 to 1977. The anti-rape movement is a socio-political movement which is part of the movement whose objective is to struggle violence against the abuse of women. The movement seeks to change community attitudes to violence against women such as attitudes of entitlement to sex and victim blaming, as well as attitudes of women themselves such as self-blame for violence against them.

This movement happened when a new conceptualization of rape arose out of second wave Feminism. Rape was discussed as an issue of civil liberty. Anti-Rape Movement was popularized when some organization took the issue as primary concern to work out those organizations are Mahila Dakshita Samiti (MDS), Stree Sangarsha Samiti (SSS), Socialist Women's Group, Feminist Network Collective (FNC), Purogami Sangatana, Stree Sakti Sangatana, Pennurumi Iyyakum, and some AUTONOMEOUS Women's Organizations they fought and conducted mass rally regarding some dreadful rapes cases.

Some of the important rape cases that lead to mass rallies are the gang rape by police on a beggar woman called Lakshmi in Punjab, the cases of Rameezabee and Shakeelabee in Hyderabad raised public furry. Democratic rights organizations and journals also brought into light the cases of gang rape in Pathnagar, Rajahar, Agra, Bhojpur. It was in this time the
highlighted Matura rape case came to light, Mathura was a 14 year old girl was summoned to the police station late in the night at Chandrapur near Nagpur in Maharashtra, two police constables raped her and session court of Nagpur alleged Mathura as "Loose of Morals" and declared police as innocent. The High Court convicted the rapists and lashed to seven and half year imprisonment. This gave birth to nationwide anti-rape demonstration. From every corner of the country, women's group demand for law amendments. One of the important organization named Freedom Without Fear Platform (FWFP) fought and the laws amended and came new Anti-Rape Law.

Another important women's movement was Anti Arrack Movement: It was one of the historic and most significant movement in the decade of 1990 by women. The women's movement against social evil, the movement was started in a small village called Dubagunta in Nellore district. The main reason for this movement was the successful literary mission of Nellore district. In Dubagunta village Rossamma was the leader who gave slogan 'Give up Drink and Wake up from Ignorance'. They stopped Arracks (local liquor) from making it. Anti-arrack community with 24 members blocked the roads conducted dharnas. Renuka Chowdary as the chairperson of Anti arrack community played a pivotal role in this movement. In 1st October 1993 arrack was prohibited because of the movement and 1st January 1995 selling liquor became offensive.

Anti-Dowry Movement was also breakthrough in the
wave of women liberation. It emerged around 1979 continuing through till 1984. It was largely urban based yet nationwide in scope not just in rhetoric but also in the active participation of woman across classes in the country. In 1974 the committee on the status of women in India (CSWI) and later the parliamentary joint select committee found two things that one is female child election or identification and second is prevailing dowry. Dowry has spread to all Castes, communities, religions, and regions. Dowry has to come to include the entire character of gift exchange between the two groups. By 1982 women's organization were insisting that majority of young bride death is due to the reason of dowry or suicide is because of the insisting dowry problems. Some organization like Mahila Daksataha Samiti, National federation of Indian Women, All India Democratic Women's Association, NARI RAKSHA SAMITI, came forward to oppose the system by possessing the dishonourable murder of Sudha Goul, in 1983 high court sentenced husband death penalty and mother in law, brother in law as life imprisonment. In 1984 government amended the dowry bill and further implementation was in 1985 October.

One of the major important movements was Dalit Women's Movement: The Dalit Mahila Samiti (DMS) is the organizational name for a movement of Dalit women in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh (UP). DMS is supported by Vanangana, a feminist NGO that has its roots in the Mahila Samakhya (MS) program, which was launched by the Government of India in the late 1980's to empower women
through the popular education approach. The Mahila Samakhya staffs were given a firm grounding in feminist thinking, and trained in grassroots mobilization and leadership based on feminist empowerment principles.

Dalit movements fight against untouchability, Casteism and economic exploitation exists in India since 1920s. Dr. Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi and E.V.R. Periyar have made historical contributions towards the abolition of the 'monstrous crime of untouchability'. Despite the fact that India constitutionally abolished the practice of "untouchability" in 1950, the practice continues in the constitution's fifty second year and violence has become a defining characteristic of the abuse. The government needs to take strong steps to end untouchability.

In the end of eighties, dalit women progressively started arguing that their needs, difficulties and aspirations were rarely accounted for by both movements. They felt the need for a separate platform and emerged as a recognizable group of dalit women's movement in the early nineties. During this period, three Dalit Women's Organisations were created on national level. In 1987, Manorama, President of Women's voice, an organisation helped to organize the first national meeting of dalit women in Bangalore and it gave rise to the National Federation of Dalit Women in 1995 and that was protesting in Durban at the antiracism conference from August 31 to September 7, 2001.

It revealed and demanded that Caste discrimination be considered and condemned on par with racism. The All India
Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), a national women's movement organized a convention on 'Dalit Women's Rights against Untouchability and Oppression' to support the causes of Dalit women. The 'National Conference on Dalit Women' held in 1999 brought out a report on Dalit Women's rights and status in India. The position of dalit women in Tamilnadu is dejected. Dalit women's movements have taken numerous efforts to improve their situation. AIDWA, took the initiative to organize women in different parts of India especially in Tamil Nadu.

In September 2000, a dalit women's conference was organized by Tamil Nadu Dalit Pengal Iyakkam (Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Movement) mobilizing nearly 10,000 dalit women from all over the state. The conference deliberated various issues such as untouchability, Caste atrocities, the impact of globalization on dalit women and violence against women during Caste clashes. The conference inherited a separate identity for dalit women and made them aware of their rights. Tamil Nadu Dalit Pengal Iyakkam (Tamil Nadu Dalit Women's Movement) organised a state level meet in Erode on eradication of untouchability, in November 2001.

It necessitated a regulator committee to avert untouchability crimes, priority for dalits in education and job opportunities, an awareness campaign on human rights and distribution of 'panchami' land to dalit women. In the International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR), Tamil Nadu Women's Forum occupies a significant position by doing the entire documentation of
cases of discrimination and violence against dalit women.

The Dalit of Maharashtra launched the Dalit Panthar movement in the early 1970s. Panthar discards the dominant culture and identity for the oppressed classes especially for women. The defence for this movement was mainly from intellectual side by literature. Dalit fought against devadasi system, another incident was from Kerala under the leadership of C K Janu she fought for the justice of Wayanad adivasi people. There are some other Dalit women's movements like Anti Untouchable movement, Harijan movement, Dalit Liberation movement. Dalit women participated in these Movements. There are some associations that stand for the justice of Dalit women which are Rural Community Development Association, Rural Harijan Agricultural Development Society, and association of Poor.

Numerous NGOs and Organizations that support to women's movement in India are mentioned below:

- Joint Women's programme
- National Council of Women in India
- Committee on the Portrayal of Women in Media
- National Commission of Women
- National federation if Indian Women
- Diverse Women for Diversity
- Kali for Women
- Sahile
- SEWA
- Single women's Organization
LGBT MOVEMENTS

The Indian lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movement is a prism of many fascinating colours. This movement, uncovering the diversity of genders and sexualities in our societies, grapples to bring to an end to the discrimination against them. As an organized political movement the Indian LGBT movement is still quite young, having taken its first few steps in the early 1990s. However, it did not happen overnight. It has rather been an upshot of some wider developments, both manifest and latent, across India and the world at large.

The LGBT movement in India has had as its departure point the questioning of love and desire between men and women as natural, necessary and compulsory and any other form of love/desire as abject, pathological and aberrant. The term ‘queer’ increasingly has become synonymous with LGBT individuals, collective and communities. The LGBT movement has used a two-pronged strategy to fight mainstream discrimination – the discourse on human rights and identity politics. At one level, they have fought to be recognized as citizens of the nation and ‘normal’ human beings. At another level, they have celebrated their queer lifestyles, practices and beliefs. The field of LGBT movement has been further
complicated with the global epidemic of HIV/AIDS and the male homosexual community has aligned itself with it. Lesbian and bisexual women have established links with the women’s movement(s) with an agenda of questioning heterosexism within feminist theory and praxis.

Bombay Dost is India’s leading ‘gay magazine’ which began as a newsletter in 1990 by Ashok Kavi Row. Two years later, on August 11, 1992, the first recorded gay protest occurred outside police headquarters in the ITO area of New Delhi. It was sparked by police picking up men from a park in Connaught Place under suspicion of homosexuality. Deepa Mehta’s film ‘Fire’ was the next milestone in the queer conversation. The film followed the forbidden sexual desires of protagonists Radha and Sita. When it was released in 1998, members of right-wing groups such as Shiv Sena and Bajrang Dal stormed cinema halls across the country in an attempt to stop the audience from viewing it. Thus, the release of this movie sparked a national conversation on lesbian and gay rights. In its aftermath, a new lesbian rights group called Campaign for Lesbian Rights (CALERI) was formed. 2nd July, 1999 saw the first Indian pride parade being held in Kolkata. While it was a small group with no more than 15 people, it was a significant achievement as it saw the arrival of a visible queer politics in the country.

2014 saw a landmark decision by the Supreme Court of India in the case of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) versus the Union of India. The court declared transgender people as a third gender and affirmed their
fundamental rights under the Indian Constitution. Moreover, it recognized the transgender people’s right to self-identify.

The centre piece of much of the queer activism in India in the last few decades has been Section 377 of the IPC, which criminalises all sexual practices except penis-vaginal penetration. Apart from that the queer community has put together reports documenting the violence and marginalisation that gays, lesbians and transgenders have been facing. In 2018, the Supreme Court finally ruled that Section 377 was unconstitutional and hence decriminalized homosexuality within India.

This historic decision was followed the next year by the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019. This bill made many improvements to the 2016 version by decriminalizing begging and removal of a screening process. But the bill is yet to adhere to international standards of separation of medical and legal procedures. Transgender people are still required to acquire a certificate signed by a government doctor and district magistrate. Moreover, their identity is finalized by a panel of psychologists instead of being based on their self-declaration.
Marginalisation, as a complex process of specific group(s) of people to the lower or the outer edge of the society, operates as function, as cause and also as a social product. The word marginalization is simply means exclusion from the mainstream of the current society. Marginalization of any community or person can be because of various reasons like speaking a different language, physical appearance, following different customs, belonging to different religious groups from the majority of community, low caste, sex etc. Marginalization is linked to experiencing disadvantage, prejudice, poverty and powerlessness.

The Oxford Dictionary defines the word marginalization as an act of pushing something towards the margin or treating a person, group or concept as in-significant or peripheral. Robert Park in the year 1928 has given an impetus to the concept of marginality. According to him, it is a process where a person is pushed to the edge or neglected in a group or in the society at large. Mulk Raj Anand said that marginalization is a complex and shifting phenomenon linked to social status. Thus marginalization as a process takes place at different aspects of life shaped by cultural, social and political, economical processes within a society which systematically and deliberately excludes particular groups or communities from the whole society.
Indian society has been characterised as heterogeneous and is therefore understood more in terms of its complexity and diversity than similarities. The diversity is perceived in terms of social categories like religion, caste, language and territory. Hence the marginalization in India may manifest itself in various forms. Some major forms of marginalized groups are given below:

**SCHEDULED CASTES OR DALITS**

The social hierarchy of the Indian society operating through several centuries imposed a number of burdens on the so called lower classes including the untouchables and other so called Shudras. Social inequality is a product of Hindu Caste ridden society. Two third of India’s population are socially, economically and educationally backward. As a result certain classes advanced socially, economically, educationally at a direct and demonstrable cost of the lower classes that, on the other hand, went on becoming more and more backward. Scheduled Castes or Dalits Caste based marginalization is one of the most severe human rights problem in globe today adversely affecting millions of people reside in India. The marginalization of dalits influences all spheres of their life, violating basic human rights like civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. All the factors affect their health status, access to health care and quality of life. But in recent years due to affirmative action and legal protection, the intensity of caste based marginalization is in lowering tendency.
SCHEDULED TRIBES

With the UN Declaration of 1993 as the International Year of Indigenous People, the term ‘indigenous’ had also come into circulation as an equivalent for the category ‘tribe’ though the Government of India and some tribal activists/organisations took different interpretations of the term. In Indian society the scheduled tribes like the scheduled castes face structural discrimination. These scheduled tribes are a result of marginalization based on ethnicity.

The Anthropological Survey of India says that there are 461 tribal communities in India, of which 174 are identified as subgroups. They are “disparate and heterogeneous with wide-ranging diversities in respect of language, physical characteristics, demographic traits and cultural exposure.” In India, 84.3 million scheduled tribe population is considered to be socially, culturally and economically disadvantaged. Their population differs from state to state. Scheduled tribes are predominantly landless with very little control over resources such as land, forest and water. They constitute a major proportion of landless agricultural labourers, casual labourers, plantation labourers, industrial labourers etc. Consequently they are experiencing poverty, low levels of education, poor health and reduced access to healthcare services. Therefore they belong to the poorest strata of the society and have severe health problems. Thus in India scheduled tribe people are also marginalized in many ways.

The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes constitute about 25% of the total population of our country. They have to
face social disparities and economic backwardness. The framers of the Indian constitution were fully aware of their poor socio-economic conditions. Therefore, they have been given special privileges by the Indian constitution Scheduled Castes referring to the lower Castes of Hindu society who suffers from the problem of untouchability. The constitution of India incorporates certain provisions and safeguards for the protection and upliftment of Scheduled Castes. A tribe is an anthropological concept. It is defined as a social group usually with a definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unified social organization. In the recent times the term ‘Adivasi’ is used to refer to the tribe. There are a number of tribes in India, spread over different parts, at different levels of socio-economic development.

L.P Vidyarthi has made a four-fold classification of Indian tribes such as (i) The Himalayan (ii) Middle Indian (iii) Western Indian and (iv) Southern Indian regions. Inspite of their cultural and economic differences, the tribal’s are economically, educationally and politically backward, compared to the non – tribal group.

**Constitutional Safeguard for SC and ST**

Elaborate arrangements have been made for protecting the interests of the people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Part XVI of the Constitution. The definitions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, including Anglo-Indians, are given in Part XIX of the Constitution. Thus, Art. 366(24) defines Scheduled Castes as "such castes, races or tribes or parts of groups within such
castes, races or tribes as are deemed under Art.341 to be the Scheduled Castes for the purposes of this Constitution."

Literally speaking, Scheduled Castes or Depressed Classes belong to the low castes, which are also treated as untouchables by virtue of belonging to the Sudra segment of the Hindu society. That is, they cannot claim the privileges of the people belonging to the upper castes (Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) known as Savarnar what the English rulers wrongly called the 'Caste Hindus'

**Reservations seats in the Legislatures**

Reservations have been made in favour of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes so as to secure their seats in the Lok Sabha, the Vidhan Sabhas of the States and posts in public services. Art. 330 says that seats shall be reserved in the House of People for (a) the Scheduled Castes, (b) the Scheduled Tribes except the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam, and (c) the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam. The number of seats reserved in any State or Union Territory for the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats allotted to the State or the Union Territory in the Lok Sabha as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the States or Union Territory or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State or Union Territory or part of the State or Union Territory, as the case may be, in respect of which seats are so reserved, bears to the total population of the State or Union Territory. It may, however, be pointed out that while reservation of seats in the Lok Sabha to Scheduled Castes and
Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population in the State or Union Territory is clearly provided; a person belonging to this category may also contest election in a non-reserved constituency. Obviously, this provision gives weightage to the people belonging to these categories.

Then, Art. 332 make a similar provision for the reservation of seats in the Legislative Assemblies of the States. It lays down:

1. Seats shall be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes except the Scheduled Tribes in the autonomous districts of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya, in the Legislative Assembly of every State.

2. Seats shall be reserved also for the autonomous districts in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Assam.

3. The number of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of any State under clause (1) shall bear as nearly as may be the same proportion to the total number of seats in the Assembly as the population of the Scheduled Castes in the State or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State or part of the State, as the case may be, in respect of which seats are reserved, bears to the total population of the State.

3A. notwithstanding anything contained in clause (3), until the taking effect, under Art. 170, of the readjustment on the basis of the first census after the year 2000 of the total
number of seats in the Legislative Assemblies of the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland, the seats which shall be reserved for the Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of any such State, shall be”

(a) if all the seats in the Legislative Assembly of such State in existence on the date of coming into force of the Constitution (Fifty-seventh Amendment) Act, 1987 (hereafter in this clause referred to as the existing Assembly) are held by members of the Scheduled Tribes, all the seats except one;

(b) in any other case, such number of seats as bears to the total number of seats, a proportion not less than the number (as on the said date) of members belonging to the Scheduled Tribes in the existing Assembly bears to the total number of seats in the existing Assembly.

4. The number of seats reserved for an autonomous district in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Assam shall bear to the total number of seats in the Assembly a proportion not less than the population of the district bears to the total population of the State.

5. The constituencies for the seats reserved for any autonomous districts of Assam shall not comprise any area outside the district.

6. No person who is not a member of a Scheduled Tribe of any autonomous district of the State of Assam shall be eligible for election to the Legislative Assembly of the State for any constituency of that district.
National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

Article 338 of the Indian Constitution provides for the setting up of a National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It lays down:

1. There shall be a Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to be known as the National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

2. Subject to the provision of any law made in this behalf by the Parliament, the Commission shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and five other members so appointed shall be such as the President may by rule determine.

3. The Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and other members of the Commission shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.

4. The Commission shall have the power to regulate its own procedure.

5. It shall be the duty of the Commission:

(a) to investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under this Constitution or under any other law for the time being in force or under any order of the government and to evaluate the working of such safeguards;
(b) to inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;

(c) to participate and advise on the planning process of socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union and any State;

(d) to participate and advise on the planning process of socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union and any State; to present to the President annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards;

(e) to make in such reports recommendations as to the measures that should be taken by the Union or any State for the effective implementation of those safeguards and other measures for the protection, welfare and socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes; and

(f) to discharge such other functions in relation to the protection, welfare and development and advancement of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes as the President may, subject, to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, by rule specify.

6. The President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament along with a memorandum
explaining the action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations relating to the Union and the reasons for the non-acceptance, if any, of any of such recommendations.

7. Where any such report, or any part thereof relates to any matter with which any State Government is concerned, a copy of such report shall be forwarded to the Governor of the State who shall cause it to be laid before the Legislature of the State along with a memorandum explaining the action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations, relating to the State and the reasons for the non-acceptance, if any, of any of such recommendations.

8. The Commission shall, while investigating any matter referred to in sub-clause (a) or inquiring into any complaint referred to in sub-clause (b) of clause (5) have all the powers of a civil court trying a suit and, in particular in respect of the following matters, namely:

(a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of India and examining him on oath;
(b) Requiring the discovery and protection of any document;
(c) Receiving evidence on affidavits;
(d) Requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court or office;
(e) Issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses and documents;
Any other matter which the President may, by rule, determine.

9. The Union and every State Government shall consult the Commission on all major policy matters affecting Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

10. "In this article, reference to the Scheduled Castes shall be construed as including reference to such other backward classes as the President may, on the receipt of the report of a commission appointed under clause (1) of article 340, by order specify and also to the Anglo-Indian community."

The setting up of such a high-powered commission vide the Sixty-fifth Constitution Amendment Act of 1990 is regarded as a distinct improvement upon the earlier arrangement of a Special Officer for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

WOMEN

On the basis of different economic conditions and the influence of specific historical, cultural, legal and religious factors, marginalization is one of the manifestations of gender inequality. Gender is a form of structural marginality. Women are forced to attain marginal status by the continuous rejection by males. Patriarchy is a universally exploitative system, where women may have some power, but that is operated within a set of patriarchal norms. Patriarchal relations within the family, state and occupation determine their status in their social, political and economic spheres of life. Thus patriarchy leads to the exclusion of women forms every significant sphere
of state and society. Besides this other factors also pushed them to a state of marginalization.

In India, women constitute around 48% of the total population and comprise one-third of the labour force, however they are beginning to acquire the status of marginalized. India has witnessed gender inequality from its early history. Since long, the condition of women in Indian society has been marked by discrimination and inequality. While going through the history of women from ancient times to the present day, we find that the position of women has been changing from authority and freedom to that of subordination and slavery. But today situation has been changed much among the urban upper and middle class women relating to the persistence of inequality between men and women. Although in a multilayered society like India certain groups of women tend to be more vulnerable to discrimination than others. Thus women have been one of the most marginalized sections of Indian society.

Domestic violence against women is on the rise. It is estimated that about twenty percent of the woman are subject to such harsh treatment from families. They are often troubled and compelled to bring in more dowry. Women are considered as objects of sex and the numbers of sex related offences are on the rise and even after the implementation of stringent laws to deal with this problem, these offences are increasing day by day making them most insecure in the society. They get lesser wages than a man in many societies despite the guarantee of equal wages. Their participation in social and political life is
not much even today. Thus in the ultimate analysis, even in 21st century, women are discriminated and are forced to live a marginalized life.

**Constitutional Safeguard**

The India Constitution takes care of the rights of women by incorporating such provisions in the Constitutional of India for the protection of women. The preamble of the Constitution of India and contains the spirit of the Constitution, contains the goal of equality of status and opportunity to all citizens. Part III Fundamental Rights- Article 14, 15 and 16 embodies the concept of equality, the right of a person to have suitable livelihood, the basic right of a person to live with dignity and the right of a person from being exploited .Part IV Directive Principles of State Policy are fundamental in the governance of the country even though they are not enforceable. It provide for the welfare of the people, including women. Principles relevant for the welfare of the women are covered. Article 39 (a) provides for the duty of state to provide adequate means of livelihood equally for both men and women. Article 39 (d) is based on the principle that for equal work performed – a woman and a man should be provided with the same remuneration. Article 39 (e) imposes a duty on the State protect its citizens from any abuse of their health and strength. Article 42 again imposes a duty on the State to provide for maternity relief and to ensure good conditions of work. 12 iii) Fundamental Duties: Article 51-A(e) imposes certain duties on every citizen towards the State. Among those the one that is worth mentioning here is the duty to renounce practices which
are derogatory and against the dignity of women. iv) Women’s participation in local bodies: Even after independence, the participation of women was not satisfactory and they were kept away from contesting elections. The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution brought about a change in this situation. This amendment has ensured reservation for women in local body elections.

The other legislations which are for the protection of the women against atrocities can be classified as under:

1. Offences Under the IPC: (i) the offence of Rape under Section 375-376 (ii) the offence of Kidnapping & Abduction under sections 363-373 (iii) the offence of Dowry Death under section 304-B (iv) the offence of cruelty under section 498-A (v) the offence of outraging modesty under sections 354, 354A-D (vi) the offence of intentional insult to outrage modesty under section 509 (vii) the offence of importation of girls from foreign land for immoral purposes

2. Offences that falls under Special Laws the Constitution of India recognizes certain special rights to the women and consequently the same protective provisions were extended to the women under several other laws as well. The following are some of the special laws in which there are protective provisions for women: (i) The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948 (ii) The Plantation Labour Act, 1951 (iii) The Family Courts Act, 1954 (iv) The Special Marriage Act, 1954 (v) The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (vi) The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 with amendment in

The National Commission for Women

The National Commission for Women was set up as statutory body in January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990. Major functions of NCW are: a) review the Constitutional and Legal safeguards for women b) recommend remedial legislative measures c) facilitate redressal of grievances and d) advise the Government on all policy matters affecting women. The objective of the NCW is to represent the rights of women in India and to provide a voice for their issues and concerns. The subjects of their campaigns have included dowry, politics, religion, equal representation for women in jobs, and the exploitation of women for labour. They have also discussed police abuses against women.

CHILDREN

An infant mortality and morbidity among children are
causes and compounded by poverty, their sex and caste position in social structure. India has made some significant commitments towards ensuring the basic rights of children. There has been progress in overall indicators: infant mortality rates are down, child survival is up, literacy rates have improved and school dropout rates have fallen. But the issue of child rights in India is still caught between legal and policy commitments to children on the one hand, and the fallout of the process of globalization on the other.

Discrimination against the children has been a fact that has long been recognised in the country. Though the basis of such discriminations may be multifarious. Millions of children in India engaged in hazardous occupations as child labours. India has the largest number of child labourers under the age of 14 years in the world. Among these children, the street children and children of sex workers face additional forms of discrimination. Trafficking of children also continued to be a severe problem and a great burning issue in front of us in India. Poverty has direct influence on the mortality and morbidity among children. In India girl child faces differentiation and discrimination access to nutritious food, and gender based violence are evident from decreasing sex ratio and rise of technology to eliminate girl child. The manifestations of such violations are numerous ranging from child labour and child trafficking to commercial sexual exploitation and many other forms of abuse and violence. Hence children community is also a marginalized group.

On November 20, 1989, the UN General Assembly
adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). On January 26, 1990, the opening day of the session, 61 countries signed it. The CRC covers all children under the age of 18 years, regardless of sex, colour, language, religion or race. India ratified the CRC in 1992.

**Constitutional Safeguard**

The Constitution of India, Article 15 affirms the right of the State to make special provision for women and children. The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards.

Article 24 provides that no child below the age of 14 shall be employed to work…in any hazardous employment. Article 39 (e) of the Directive Principles of State Policy provides that children of tender age should not be abused and that they should not be forced by economic necessity to enter vocations unsuited to their age or strength. Article 39 (f) requires children to be given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity, and that childhood and youth be protected against exploitation and
moral and material abandonment.

Prior to the Fifth Five-Year Plan, the government’s focus was on child welfare through the promotion of basic minimum services for children. This culminated in the adoption of the National Policy for Children, in 1974. The Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-79) saw a shift of focus from welfare to development and the integration and co-ordination of services after the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) 1975. The Sixth Five-Year Plan strengthened child welfare and development. It led to the spatial expansion and enrichment of child development services through a variety of programmes. The focus of the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-97) shifted to human development through advocacy, mobilisation and community empowerment. The Government of India declared its commitment to every child in the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002). The Tenth Five-Year Plan advocated a convergent/integrated rights-based approach to ensure the survival, development, protection and participation of children. The Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007-2012) prepared by the Planning Commission emphatically stated that ‘Development of the child is at the centre of the Eleventh Plan’. Despite these laws, policies and commitments, however, what is the actual situation for India’s children vis-à-vis health, education, early childhood care and protection?

Over the last few years, the government has taken a number of measures related to children. Ministry of Women and Child Development is at the apex of the organisational structure for the protection and the promotion of the rights of
the child and ensuring their welfare stands the ministry of women and child development as part of the Human Resource Development Ministry. Among the policy and law initiatives that were undertaken was the formulation of the National Charter for Children 2003, the National Plan of Action for Children 2005, and enforcement of the National Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act 2006. However, the National Policy for Children 1974 has not been repealed, nor does the charter override it. Thus, the status of the charter is not very clear. The government announced the much-discussed and long-delayed National Plan of Action 2005 only in August 2005. Led by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the government has completed a study on child abuse in India and is in the process of drafting a law on Offences against Children. It has also initiated the process of amending the present law on child marriage. Parliament has recently passed the Prohibition of Child Marriage Bill 2006, which enhances punishment for those involved in these practices, and people abetting or attending child marriages. It also declares all child marriages null and void. This is also the main criticism against the legislation that will come into force as a law applicable retrospectively – i.e., all child marriages that have taken place in the past will be declared null and void and the status of children born out of such marriages will come under question.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act 2000 was amended in 2006 and the Central Model Rules in this regard are being formulated.

The Model Right to Education Bill is not available for
public scrutiny/comment, as is also the case with the Offences against Children Bill. The Offences against Children Bill has drawn criticism based on drafts available through various sources. The first is that it is too vast in terms of the kind of offences it seeks to address under one umbrella legislation. The second is that, unlike the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA) that extends to the whole of India, the proposed legislation keeps the State of Jammu and Kashmir out of its scope. The third, and most important, criticism is that since many of the offences dealt with under the proposed Bill are of a very serious nature, the criminality of those offences should be established through the main criminal law of the land, ie the Indian Penal Code and not through a social legislation. India already has a strong juvenile justice law to deal with social and reformatory aspects of a crime; that law could be strengthened further to ensure that human rights standards of child protection are met whilst rehabilitating a child victim. Moreover, both the Home Ministry and the Law Ministry are working on amendments in the Criminal Procedure Code, and many activists feel that this is the right time to seek appropriate amendments to ensure child-friendly legal procedures within the CRPC and the Indian Evidence Act.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

The National Commission for the Protection of the Child Rights (NCPCR) was established in the country in 2005 under an act of parliament for the protection and promotion of the child rights was taken with the view to evolve a comprehensive and all encompassing framework of child welfare.
Thus, India can now be recognised as one of the important countries in the world that had indeed able to evolve over the years a concerted and coordinated policy and institutional framework for the protection and promotion of the rights of the children. Though the implementation of these policies cannot be said to be satisfactory, they have surely been able to achieve some good results despite all sorts of constraints and difficulties in bringing about a turnaround in the fortune of the children in the country.

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