ARTICULATION OF REGIONAL IDENTITY AND DEMAND FOR SEPARATE STATEHOOD IN INDIA

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Abstract

This paper deals with the formation of states in India and discusses the issue of the demand for separate statehood in the context of regional development. The British divided India into provinces on the principle of administrative convenience. The Indian National Congress was preoccupied with national integration and underplayed the need for regional division of India, especially on the basis of language. But demand for recognition of language as the basis for state formation forced the government to appoint the State Reorganisation Commission and effect a major reorganisation of states on the basis of language in 1956. Subsequently there have been further demands for statehood based on issues other than language, especially ethnic identity and regional development. Recognition of regional identity has its positive role in a federal nation like India. But it can have negative consequences such as inter-state conflicts and strain in centre-state relations. Disparity in regional development has been an underlying factor in the continuing demands for separate statehood in India. The answer to this issue has to be found in the joint efforts of the central and state governments to reduce regional imbalance in development rather than reorganisation of states.

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INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of India describes the nation as a 'Union of States' which implies its indestructible feature of unity as well as the regional differences. Articulation of the differences in the form of regionalism in India is rooted in the diverse languages, cultures, tribes and religions, and is often encouraged by the regional concentration of those identity markers and fuelled by a sense of regional deprivation. The rich diversity of India may look like an obstacle to unity. But Indian federalism is based on the recognition of differences and is flexible enough to accommodate the regional diversities. The spirit behind the federal structure of the country is to ensure the geographical, political and economic unification of the diverse Indian society for the overall welfare and equal opportunities for the growth of its people. That is how, in the age of what Eric Hobsbawm has called 'nation splitting', India's survival as a nation-state has been observed as remarkable (Bhattacharya 2005: 2-3).

The states that form the Indian Union are regional divisions which enjoy certain level of autonomy. When the Constitution of India was adopted in 1950, the republic of India was a union of 29 regional states. But it has not remained the same. A major reorganisation of the states based on language was undertaken in 1956. Thereafter there have been further divisions of states or changes in the boundaries of states over the years. Today the Indian Union consists of 28 states and 7 union territories. While the states enjoy certain amount of autonomy from the federal or central government, the union territories are directly under the governance of the Indian Union. The states and union territories in India are regional divisions of the Union characterised by their own regional identities.

The basis for division of India into states has not been the same in all the cases. The bases of regional identity for the division of the nation into states have evolved since the British times. From the beginning of the republic there have been demands from different regions for separate statehood on different grounds. Some such demands for statehood have turned even violent struggles. Some other demands have faced counter moves, and not all the struggles or demands have succeeded in getting separate statehood. An important issue involved in the demand for separate statehood after the

reorganisation of states based on language in 1956 has been that of disparity in regional development. This paper deals with the process of formation of regional states in India and discusses the issue of the demand for separate statehood in the context of regional development. This is done in two parts. The first part of the paper presents a historical account of the formation of states in India. The second part discusses the issue of regional disparity in development as an important issue in the context of demand for separate statehood in the period after the reorganisation of states in 1956. The concluding part of the paper addresses the issue of regional disparity in development and points out the need for special development schemes in the backward regions in order to deal with the issue of underdevelopment rather than seeking separate statehood.

FORMATION OF STATES IN INDIA

This section deals with the evolution of the regional division of India into states and the demand for separate statehood since the British times. It discusses (i) the British division of India into provinces, based on the principle of administrative convenience; (ii) the stand taken by the Indian National Congress in the matter of formation of states; (iii) the situation of regional division at the time of independence in 1947; (iv) the major reorganisation based on language following the recommendation of the State Reorganisation Commission in 1956; and (v) the subsequent demands for separate statehood based on identity other than language.

British Period

During the British period India was drawn in a haphazard manner as the British conquest of India had proceeded for nearly hundred years. The authors of the Mount Ford Report of the Indian Constitutional Reforms (1918) noted that the "the units were shaped by the military, political and administrative exigencies or conveniences of the moment" with small regard to the natural affinities or wishes of the people (Azam 1981: 97). For instance, the division of the Bengal Presidency by the British in 1905 was based on religion without regard to language identity, which had been a significant factor in the regional differences in India.

But language, which became an important basis for regional division after independence, was not altogether ignored during the British period. In the British Parliament, John Bright (1858) said that the provinces of India should be grouped into five administrative groups on the basis of geography and language. Secondly, with the vivisection of Bengal on religious basis the leaders of the nationalist movement began to recognise language as basis for organisation of states. For instance, in 1908 Lokamanya Tilak said before the Royal Commission on Public Services, constituted in 1886, that states should be organised on language basis and then onwards he became the forefront leader advocating this principle.

At a later stage, the Indian Commission, also known as the Simon Commission, in its report submitted in 1930 on the question of linguistic reorganisation, advocated reorganisation of the provinces which was to be more or less based on linguistic principles. The commission pointed out that use of common speech was a strong and natural basis for provincial individuality (Fadia 2003: 471). As a part of deliberations of the second round table conference in 1931, V.V. Giri and Diwan Bahadur Ramachander Rao, two of the then prominent persons from the southern part of India and other leaders presented memoranda to the British government for linguistic redistribution of provinces in India (Azam 1981: 98).

Indian National Congress

The idea of reorganisation of states during the British was developing along with the idea of provincial autonomy. In that context the major concern of the Indian National Congress regarding the matter of regional divisions was the unity of the country. At the same time the Congress recognised the importance of language in regional division. For instance, the Congress strongly opposed the partition of Bengal when it violated the principle of linguistic unity. The Congress also recognised the linguistic principle when the separate province of Bihar was created in 1908 (Azam 1981: 99).
The Congress had reaffirmed the principle of linguistic reorganisation of states on three occasions between 1928 and 1947. In 1928 an all party conference attended by Sikh, Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha, and presided over by Motilal Nehru appointed a committee (known as the Motilal

Nehru Committee) to draft a constitution for full and responsible government in India. The committee supported the organisation of regions on linguistic principles (Dutta 1993: 7). It recommended that the principle governing the redistribution of provinces should be partly geographical and partly economical, but the main considerations must necessarily be the wishes of the people and the linguistic unity of the area concerned. The Calcutta session of the Congress in 1937 reaffirmed the policy of forming linguistic states and recommended the formation of Andhra and Karnataka. The meeting of the Congress executive committee held at Wardha in 1938 received memoranda and deputations from several organisations for separate linguistic states, such as Andhra, Kerala and Karnataka. The meeting declared its intention of considering the demands when it would come to power. In line with   this stand the Congress in its 1945 election manifesto said that it was the aim of the party to provide opportunities to the people to develop according to their intentions and every group of people and every region of the country to develop culturally. In order to achieve this, the Congress accepted organisation of states on the basis of language and culture.

Despite its view on the importance of language in regional division, the Congress had its priority of national unity. Speaking on the linguistic question, Jawaharlal Nehru clearly stated on 27 November 1947 that "first thing must come first and the first thing is the security and stability of India" (Chandra *et al.* 2007: 126*).* Hence, Nehru and other leaders, while still committed to the principle of linguistic states, accorded the task of redrawing India's administrative map a low priority. There were various reasons for this. Partition had created serious administrative, economic and political dislocation. Independence, coming immediately after the war, was accompanied by serious economic, and law and order problems. What the Congress central leadership wanted to do was to monopolise the symbols (e.g. of national unity, secularism, development etc). Secondly, Nehru and his associates were influenced by the eastern concept of democracy, modernisation and development. These had led them to deduce that any regional or sectional demands would only disrupt the democratic structure and harm the process of nation building. Following the priority of the Congress on national unity, report of the Linguistic Provinces Commission, set up in 1948 under the chairmanship of S.K. Dar, recommended that "the

emphasis should be primarily on administrative convenience, and homogeneity of language will enter into consideration only as a matter of administrative convenience and not by its own independent force" (Fadia 2003: 471). On the recommendation of the Dar Committee the Congress government thought of postponing state reorganisation.

However, in order to counter public pressure from caste lobbies for reviving the reorganisation of states and the communist support for linguistic redistribution, meet its non-electoral demands, and appease the vocal votaries of linguistic states, the Congress appointed a committee, consisting of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitharamayya (popularly known as the JVP committee) in December 1948 to examine the question afresh. Though the committee conceded the demand for linguistic redistribution, it nevertheless advocated postponement on the ground that any such step would "unmistakably retard the process of consolidation, dislocate administration and economy, and would let loose the forces of disruption and disintegration impeding unity and growth" (Fadia 2003: 472). At the same time the JVP committee recommended the creation of a separate unit for greater Bombay and formation of states like Mysore, Hyderabad and Travancore-Cochin. It laid emphasis on contiguity of area and consent of the people. Consequently the Constituent Assembly decided not to incorporate the linguistic principle in the Constitution. But the public opinion was not satisfied, especially in the south, and the problem remained politically alive. The JVP report was followed by popular movements for state reorganisation all over the country, which persisted with varying degrees of intensity till 1960. However, the JVP committee accepted that a strong case for the formation of a Telugu language state out of the Madras state existed, particularly as the Tamil leadership was agreeable to it. But it did not concede to the demand immediately, because the two sides could not agree on which state should have Madras city.

Constitutional Provisions

The British transferred power under the Government of India Act 1947 to the Constituent Assembly of India dominated by the Indian National Congress. The Constitution of India, which went into effect on 26 January 1950, made India a sovereign, democratic republic, and a union of states and

union territories (replacing provinces existing under the British). The states would have considerable autonomy and complete democracy in the Union, while the union territories would be administered by the government of India.

When the Constitution of India came into effect in 1950, the Republic of Indian Union had 29 states categorised into four groups: part A corresponding to the former provinces (9 states), part B comprising the erstwhile princely states (9 states), part C formerly known as Chief Commissioner's provinces (10 states) and part D of one state comprising territories not specified in schedule 1 of the Constitution (Fadia 2003: 470; Azam 1981: 96). The Constitution of India effected the territorial integration of the nation through article 1, which defines territories of India to include the territories of all states. Thus the new constitution, eradicated "all the barriers which separated states from provinces." Thus the bases for the demarcation of the states were the existing provincial division under the British and the princely states.

However, formation of states in the Indian Union was not a closed matter. The Constitution of India itself provided for reorganising the states**.** As per articles 3 and 4 of the Constitution, the Parliament can form a new state by separating a territory from any state, or merging two or more states or parts of states. Parliament can also reduce or increase the area or alter the boundary of any state or even change its name. Following is the procedure involved in the matter. A bill giving effect to the change is introduced in either house of the Parliament on the recommendation of the President of India. If the bill affects the boundary or name of a state, then the President, before introducing the bill in the Parliament, shall refer it to the state legislature concerned for its opinion. The Parliament considers the views of the state, but is not bound to accept or act upon the views of the state. The bill is passed with simple majority. In the case of a union territory, it is not necessary to obtain the views of the legislature of the union territory concerned before a bill affecting its boundaries or name is introduced.

State Reorganisation Commission

The issue of reorganisation of states on the basis of language, which had been debated at different levels before the independence, came

to the fore almost immediately after the independence. The provinces under the British were multi-linguistic or multi-cultural. The interspersed princely states added a further element of heterogeneity. While the Congress government was reluctant at reorganisation of states on the basis of language, there were movements for linguistic reorganisation of states. The movement to create a Telugu speaking state (Andhra) out of the northern portion of the Madras state, which had already been recognised by the Congress JVP committee, gathered strength in the years after independence. On 19 October 1952, a popular freedom fighter, Potti Sriramalu undertook a fast unto death over the demand for separate Andhra and expired after fifty-eight days. His death was followed by rioting, violent demonstrations, and acts of arson and vandalism all over Andhra region.

The government immediately gave in and conceded the demand for a separate state of Andhra consisting of 16 northern, Telugu speaking districts of Madras state which finally came into existence in October 1953. Simultaneously a separate Tamil speaking state was created. In view of further demands for state reorganisation, Prime Minister Nehru in 1953 appointed the State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) with Justice Fazal Ali as chairman and K.M. Panikkar and Hriday Nath Kunzru as members, to examine "objectively and dispassionately" the entire question of reorganisation of states of the Union on linguistic basis. Meanwhile a couple of small changes were made to state boundaries. The small state of Bilaspur was merged with Himachal Pradesh on 1 July 1954, and Chandernagore, a former enclave of French India was incorporated into West Bengal in 1955.

The SRC submitted its report in October 1955. It followed four principles, viz. (i) preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India, (ii) linguistic and cultural homogeneity, (iii) financial, economic and administrative considerations and (iv) successful working of the national plan (Azam 1981: 111). The commission viewed reorganisation "a highly controversial labour of reviewing the political geography of the whole country" and advocated smaller and homogeneous units (Azam 1981: 97). Despite the initial reaction against the report in many parts of the country, the SRC's recommendations were accepted with certain modifications, and were quickly implemented by the government.

The States Reorganisation Act of 1956, which followed the recommendations of the SRC and went into effect on 1 November 1956, eliminated the distinction between parts A, B and C states. It also reorganised the state boundaries and created or dissolved states and union territories. After the act the Indian Union consisted of 14 states and 7 union territories. The following were the 14 states: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Mysore, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The seven union territories were Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Lakshadweep, Pondicherry, Tripura, and Manipur.

The resolution of the government of India relating to the reorganisation said: "The language and culture of an area have an undoubted importance as they represent a pattern of living which is common in that area. In considering a reorganisation of states, however, there are other important factors which have also to be borne in mind. The first essential consideration is the preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India. Financial, economic and administrative considerations are almost equally important, not only from the point of view of each state, but for the whole nation" (Azam 1981).

The scope of the commission was so limited that it could hardly be expected to provide a philosophy of reorganisation, less than that, a scientific approach to the problem of regionalism. It was asked to work on popular memoranda and appeal without having recourse to scientific data and developmental plans. The commission viewed the problem from the perspective of unity in diversity. But it failed to emphasise physical aspects of unity. From the point of view of national integration it created more areas of conflict than it tried to reduce. Though the commission recognised and accepted both negative and positive aspects of regional consciousness – the latter as the positive expression of the collective personality of the people inhabiting a state or region – it worked under the false philosophy of language and sought to offer a linguistic solution to the problem of regional consciousness (Azam 1981: 105-6).

The language problem was the most divisive issue in the first 20 years of independent India, and it created the apprehension among many

that the cultural and political unity of the nation was in danger. People love their language; it is an integral part of culture. Consequently linguistic identity has been a strong force in all societies. This is even truer of a multi-linguistic society like India. Democracy can become real to the common people only when politics and administration are conducted through the language they can understand. But this language, the mother tongue cannot be the medium of education, administration, or judicial activity unless a state is formed on the basis of predominant language.

Post-SRC Demands beyond Language

Reorganisation of states on the basis of language identity brought about in 1956 did not end the demand for separate statehood in India. Identities other than that of language figured in the demand for formation of separate states. They were mainly based on ethnic identities of tribe and religion, and regional disparity in development. At times ethnic identities were combined with regional disparities in the quest for separate statehood.

The post-SRC reorganisation of the state of Punjab was initiated by the articulation of religious identity. The Punjabi speaking people of the state of Punjab, mainly Sikhs, under the leadership of the Akali Dal demanded a separate Punjabi speaking state. The Hindus, on the other hand, demanded a Greater Punjab containing Hindu majority. Agitations for the realisation of demands finally resulted in the decision on 1November 1966 to divide Punjab officially on linguistic (or script) lines. The Punjabi speaking districts formed the state of Punjab, seven Hindi speaking districts formed the new state of Haryana and the Hindi speaking hilly areas of Punjab contiguous with Himachal Pradesh were transferred to Himachal Pradesh. Chandigarh, the capital city of Punjab was made a union territory.

Ethnic and language identities figured as the basis in the formation of some of the north-eastern states in India. At the time of independence in 1947, only three states covered the entire area – the two erstwhile princely states of Manipur and Tripura, and the much larger Assam Province under the British with Dispur as the capital. Four new states (Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya) were carved out of the original territory

of Assam in the decades following independence, in line with the policy of the Indian government to reorganise states along ethnic/linguistic lines. Nagaland became a separate state in 1963 (Wikipedia 2010). Under the North Eastern Areas Act, 1971 of the Parliament, which came into force in January 1972, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura emerged as three separate states, and Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram as union territories. Mizoram along with Arunachal Pradesh achieved statehood in 1987. Thus at present there are seven states in the region of diversity, known as "seven sisters" – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura.

Articulation of regional identity in the context of regional development has been another non-linguistic based demand for separate statehood in the post-SRC period. It has been at times combined with ethnic identity. The new states of Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarkhand may be considered as results of the quest for statehood on the basis of regional identity. These three states were created in 2000. Chhattisgarh was formed with the sixteen Chhattisgarhi-speaking south-eastern districts of Madhya Pradesh on 1 November 2000. Uttarakhand, initially named as Uttaranchal, was created out of the hilly regions of north-west Uttar Pradesh on 9 November 2000. Jharkhand, formed out of the southern districts of Bihar, became a functioning reality on 15 November 2000 after almost half a century of people's movement based on Jharkhandi identity, which the disadvantaged groups articulated in order to augment political resources and influence the policy process in their favour.

Success of one movement for separate state may give rise to others. Following the recent announcement of the intention to create separate Telengana in Andhra Pradesh, the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati held a press conference to affirm that the ruling Bahujan Samajwadi Party led by her has consistently sought the creation of two new states out of Uttar Pradesh – Harit Pradesh and Bundelkhand. Similarly advocates of separate Vidarbha state in Maharashtra also raised fresh demand.

It may be noted that there have been unsuccessful and continuing demands for separate statehood linked to regional disparity. Take the example of Uttarpradesh, where there have been demands for the creation of

Bundelkhand, Harit Pradesh and Poorvanchal. Their advocates argue that "these are poor and neglected areas and continue to remain as the pockets of neglect. ... the only solution to all the problems – poverty, hunger, lack of development and nonexistent infrastructure – in the region is the creation of separate state" (Menon 2009: 31). The demands for separate Telengana in Andhra Pradesh, Gorkhaland in West Bengal and Bodoland in Assam are some other cases that are centred on the issue of regional disparity and have not achieved their goal.

It may also be noted here that new states have been added to the Indian Union after 1956 without further dividing the existing states. They are the cases of the union territories that have been made states. In 1971 the union territory of Himachal Pradesh was elevated to the level of state. Mizoram, created as a union territory in 1972, was conferred statehood in 1986. Goa, that was part of the union territory of Goa, Daman and Diu, became the 25th state in the Indian Union through an Act of the Parliament on 12 August 1987, while Daman and Diu formed a union territory.

Scrutiny of state formation in India would reveal that together with language other factors have been involved in the creation of separate states. They include ethnic-cum-economic considerations (Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura), religion and language script (Haryana and Punjab), language-cum-culture (Maharashtra and Gujarat), historical and political factors (Uttar Pradesh and Bihar), integration of princely states and the need for viable groupings (Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan), and language-cum-social distinctiveness –in the case of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bengal and Orissa (Majeed 2010).

REGIONAL IDENTITY AND DEMAND FOR STATEHOOD

Regional identity has been increasingly articulated in the context of the demand for separate statehood. Regional identity – its formation, expression and assertion – has been a complicated phenomenon. Motivation for separation or creation of new states varies from region to region. It may be due to emotional sentiments of rival communities, lack of educational and employment opportunities, disputes over river waters or other natural

resources, threat to language, religion and other cultural traditions, and resistance to control and oppression in various forms. An identity that embodies economic deprivation may unite protagonists of separate state against those who oppose it. The leaders of the movement may seek to instil the notion that the only way to safeguard the identity and interest of the region is to support separation. The major issues of regional identity and demand for statehood discussed in this part of the paper are (i) regional identity and regionalism; (ii) inter-state and intra-state sub-regional disparities in development; and (iii) negative consequences of the articulation of regional identity (such as inter-state conflicts and strain in centre-state relations).

Regional Identity and Regionalism

A region is a territory, the inhabitants of which have an emotional attachment to it because of commonality of language, usages and customs, social, economic and political stages of development, common historical traditions, or a common way of living. These factors provide the sentiments of togetherness among the people who share the same region or regional identity. Regionalism, as manifestation of regional identity in India, is rooted in its manifold diversity. Local patriotism and loyalty to a region or state and its language and culture, or having pride in one's region or state, or making special efforts or aspiring to develop one's state or region are all expressions of this identity. Regionalism in this sense reflects the federal features of the Constitution. Political demands of viable regions for new administrative arrangements are not necessarily antithetical to the territorial integrity of the country. For every urge of autonomy is not divisive, but most probably a complementary force; it need not lead to balkanisation but to the restructuring of national identity (Rasheeduddin Khan, cited in Bhattacharya 2005: 21). Regionalism could therefore be viewed also as a subsidiary process of political integration in India. In a vast and diversified polity like India regionalism could be a normal phenomenon.

Creation of new states within the Indian Union in response to regional demands is accepted as legitimate in this process of regional identity articulation. The success of regionalism in this manner spawned a new species which academics were to name sub-regionalism. For within a new

state based on a specific regional identity, there existed groups that were minorities in the state as a whole, but occupied a definite territory within it and by virtue of language or ethnicity had enough to bring them together and to claim separate regional identity. Such cases include those of the people of Nepalese origin in West Bengal and Bodos in Assam, both of whom organised movements for separate states of their own but had to be content in the end with autonomous councils within the existing order.

Economic deprivations and underdevelopment arising out of regional disparities have contributed to the articulation of regional identities and subsequent demand for separate statehood. An analysis of the growth performance of and structural changes in the domestic product of states in the last two decades show that developmental process has been uneven across India (Bhattacharya and Sakthivel 2008: 473). Economic motivations seeking to end economic exploitation by more powerful groups and inadequate infrastructure or inter-regional inequalities causing regional backwardness thus emerge as important factors underlying the demand for separate state. While there are sub-regional disparities within a state that raise demands for separate statehood (intra-state disparities), there are disparities among the states themselves irrespective of whether or not they are new creations to deal with the problem of regional disparity (inter-state disparities).

Inter-State Regional Disparity in Development

It is true that we should not expect even rates of development in the whole country. For instance, growth in the field of agriculture is dependent on time variant regional factors like the type of soil and natural endowments. The green revolution has also led to the accentuation of the process of regional disparities (Dutta 1993: 14). While advanced industrial states have tended to leapfrog in the reform years, other states are lagging behind. The regional disparity in the growth rates becomes sharper in terms of per capita income. The poorer states not only performed poorly but their failure to stem population growth has left them in an even worse position.

Capitalist growth in India after independence has shown a strong tendency towards self-perpetuating unevenness both region-wise and

community-wise. The uneven development of capitalism led to regional concentration of industrial development and concentration of wealth in the hands of a few along with increase in unemployment, poverty, wage erosion etc. In the wake of the economic reforms initiated in 1991, the role of private investment has acquired a special significance in the context of economic development of the various states of the Indian Union. Indeed, there has been an element of competition among states for attracting private investment, both domestic and foreign. Some of the states have been offering various tax concessions and other special facilities to new investors on a competitive basis (Kurian 2010).

There are disparities in the percentage share of different states in the investment proposals of all India financial institutions like Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), Industrial Financial Corporation of India (IFCI), Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI), Unit Trust of India (UTI), Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC), Industrial Reconstruction Bank of India (IRBI) and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI). The group of forward states such as Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab and Tamil Nadu accounted for about two-third of the amount, while the group of backward states such as Assam , Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal accounted for just about 28 per cent of the amount during 1991-1998 period. Indeed, Gujarat and Maharashtra together received 36.7 per cent of the investment proposals which is significantly more than the total investment proposals received by all the states in the second group. While Gujarat which accounts for less than 5 per cent of the population of the country received about 19 per cent of the private investment proposals, Bihar which accounts for more than 10 per cent of the population of the country received just a little over one per cent of such proposals (Kurian 2010). This could be a pointer to the direction of private investment in the coming years. Backward states with higher population growth are not able to attract investment – both private and public – due to a variety of reasons, like poor income and infrastructure, and probably also poor governance.

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Table 1
Per Capita Net State Domestic Product at Current Prices
For the year 2007-2008

STATE*	IN RUPEES
Goa	96076
Haryana	58531
Punjab	44411
Kerala	41814
Himachal Pradesh	40134
Tamil Nadu	38573
Karnataka	35555
Andhra Pradesh	34063
Sikkim	33553
West Bengal	31722
Chattisgarh	28955
Mizoram	27501
Arunachal Pradesh	27398
Meghalaya	26636
Jammu and Kashmir	24214
Orissa	23403
Rajasthan	22649
Assam	21464
Jharkhand	20177
Manipur	19258
Madhya Pradesh	18051
Uttar Pradesh	16060
Bihar	10570
All India	**33283**

*Data were not available for Gujarat, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Tripura and Uttarkhand.
Source: Government of India 2010

Data on the per capita net domestic product of the states in 2007-08, presented in table 1, show the extent of disparities among the states in India. As many as 14 out of the 23 states, for which data were available, have the per capita net domestic product that is below the national average of Rs.33283. Bihar remains at the bottom with Rs.10570 and Goa at the top with Rs.96076. Haryana, Punjab, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Sikkim, along with Goa are economically better placed with the per capita domestic product that is above the national average. States with high growth rate, like Goa, Punjab, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh are not major industrial hubs, but are powered largely by the service sector, making them the representatives of India's new economy. Goa has been ranked high as one of the best states in India for making investment and availability of infrastructure including natural resources. Being a coastal state it is accessible through sea-route in addition to air ways. Poor states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur and Assam attracted less investment and have performed poorly as shown by their net domestic product rates. Apart from lack of investment, poor infrastructure combined with poor governance (and also terrorism in states like Assam) might have also contributed to slow growth in these states (Bhattacharya and Sakthivel 2008: 464).

An important factor which influences the speed of socio-economic progress of a state is efficiency in administration. It is not a coincidence that, by and large, states which are in the forward group are better administered as compared to the states in the backward group. Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are classic cases of states bedevilled by high levels of corruption, sheer bad administration and deteriorating law and order. As a result whatever central assistance is available is poorly utilised and often diverted to non-development heads of expenditure (Chandra *et al.* 2007: 158). A better administered state is more efficient in raising revenues and putting them to better use. Such states are quick in responding to opportunities which enable them to attract more investment from both domestic and foreign sources.

Poverty in any society is considered an important indicator of backwardness. The percentage of population below poverty line differs vastly

in the different states of India. In 1999-2000 the three large states (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh) together accounted for 42.0 per cent of the total number of poor in the country. This implies that there is a concentration of poverty in economically backward larger states (Misra and Puri 2005: 913-914).

Intra-State Disparity in Development

While a state in India represents a region with its regional identity, there can be regional identity formation within a state. This intra-state sub-regional identity may be linked to perception of disparity in development and/or ethnic consciousness. With reference to disparity in development, the phenomenon of sub-regional identity articulation has two dimensions; one, a sub-region, despite being rich in resources, may have remained economically underdeveloped either because of state neglect or because of the ill conceived top-down approach of development; second, a region may survive at the cost of others through resource and earning transfers. In all the sub-state demands for separate statehood sub-regional disparity in development has been raised as the rationale for the movement. There are identifiable regions within states, which are at different stages of development and which have distinct problems to tackle. For instance, Andhra Pradesh has three regions which are at different stages of socio-economic development, viz. coastal Andhra, Telengana and Rayalaseema. In Uttar Pradesh (after the separation of Uttarkhand) Bundelkhand, Harit Pradesh and Poorvanchal have raised their identities as regions with varying problems and different levels of socio-economic development. Other sub-regional identities expressed in the context of development are Saurashtra in Gujarat, Kodaku in Karnataka, Gondwana in Madhya Pradesh, Mahakosal in Orissa, Vidarbha and Marathwada in Maharashtra, Bodoland in Assam, and Gorkhaland in West Bengal.

One of the issues involved in the creation of new states based on sub-regional identity is their economic viability. Can they sustain economic growth? If the latest cases of Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and Uttarkhand are taken into consideration, it seems that they have not performed badly during the last decade. The data on gross domestic product (GDP) from Jharkhand,

Chattisgarh and Uttarkhand indicate that they have not fared worse, if not better, than their parent states. This can be shown from the data of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The Ministry gives two macro-economic parameters in this respect. The first is the percentage increase in GDP for states and the second is the rate of contribution of individual states to the national GDP. While Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and Uttarkhand recorded 101.77, 149.68 and 182.01 per cent growth in GDP respectively, the overall GDP for the states in India increased by only 75.18 per cent during 1999-2000 and 2007-08 (table 2).

Table 2
GDP of Select States in 1999-2000 and 2007-2008

State	GDP of 1999-2000		GDP of 2007-2008		Percentage Increase
	In Rupees	Percentage to National GDP	In Rupees	Percentage to National GDP	
Bihar	50,17,376	2.81	88,28,979	2.82	75.97
Jharkhand	34,32,308	1.92	69,25,332	2.21	101.77
Madhya Pradesh	80,13,210	4.49	1,42,49,993	4.55	77.83
Chhattisgarh	27,24,873	1.53	68,03,595	2.17	149.68
Uttar Pradesh	1,75,15,935	9.8	3,44,34,627	11	96.59
Uttarkhand	12,62,090	0.71	35,59,195	1.14	182.01
India	**17,86,52,600**	**100.00**	**31,29,71,700**	**100.00**	**75.18**

Source: Yudofud (cited in Reddy 2010)

Data in table 2 also show the contribution of the three new states and their parent states to the national GDP. The parent states continue to be comparatively much larger than the new states. Naturally their share in the national GDP also is higher. What may be noted here is that, although the contribution of these newly created small states to national GDP has been lower than that of their large parent states, it has registered an increase (Reddy 2010). This shows that the creation of new states in 2000 did not have adverse impact on their economic growth.

Negative Consequences of Regional Identity Articulation

Articulation of regional identity may have desirable results from the perspective of federalism and regional development in so far as it plays a positive role in building up the language, culture and community at the regional level and thereby contributes to overall national development. However, regional identity can have negative consequences too. When the effort for distinct identity and development deviates into separatist activities it goes against nationalism. If the interest of a region or state is asserted against the country as a whole or against another region or state in a hostile manner and conflict is promoted on the basis of such alleged interests, regionalism turns anti-national or anti-federal (Chandra *et al.* 2007: 152). Regionalism of this type may take the form of parochialism. It leads to the tendency to establish closed and rigid identities between regional units, where meeting points are those of disagreement or clash with one another. Two expressions of parochialism as the negative consequences of regional or sub-regional identity articulation are inter-state conflicts and strain in centre-state relations.

In the history of the Indian nation, regionalism has often taken the form of parochialism. It can lead to violent agitation as in the attacks of Bihari labourers by the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) which believes that only Assamese speakers have the right to live and work in Assam. Likewise the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra with the slogan of the "sons of the soil" has been taking strong stand against non-Maharashtrian migrants. Similarly migrants have faced different kinds of hostile reaction from the locals in different regions of India, such as Punjab and Kashmir. Such actions are a challenge to the Constitution of India which provides the right to every citizen to move anywhere in India. A regional state cannot close its door to the people from other parts of the country, because India is a unified nation and all Indians have the right to its resources. This is guaranteed by our Constitution. India's strength as a federal nation lies in its integration.

Delimitation of the boundaries of states, districts and constituencies tend to separate and unite people in newer combinations. Migration and immigration of people across these boundaries may disturb the demographic balance of a region resulting in anxiety among the people about the retention

of their language and culture. For example, the north-east India has been a meeting point of various ethnic groups. Splitting of the region into seven states after independence has been an attempt to cater to the demands of the different ethnic categories clamouring for recognition of their distinctive identities. The ethnic unrest that continues to exist in the region in different forms shows that the nation has not yet come to terms with the impact of the articulation of regional identity in the region.

With the creation of new states, regional parties, many of which have little regard for the development of the country as a whole, tend to grow stronger, and ask for larger share in the resources from the centre. The growing regional imbalances in India have also generated stress on federal relations between the union and states. For example, the recommendations of the recent finance commissions have been accompanied by demands from the richer and fast growing states to dilute the progressiveness of the horizontal devolution formula since a higher degree of progressiveness redistributes resources from the centre away from them and towards poorer states. Recently the chief minister of Gujarat, which has developed faster than many other states over the last 25 years, is reported to have remarked that the central government "... should stop collecting taxes from Gujarat and also stop aid to the state" as "... Gujarat gives Rs.40,000 crore as taxes to the centre and only receives 2.5 per cent of it, in turn" (Sengupta and Kumar 2008: 9).

If the trends in parochialism are not properly handled they may result in communal, ethnic and language movements which distract people from all developments - economic, social and scientific. Under these circumstances national development will remain a far cry. The slogan of the sons of the soil restricting entry of outsiders, majorities exploiting minorities by imposing assimilation, and caste/religious communities transforming into political pressure groups with bounded areas hinder national development in different ways.

CONCLUSION: MEASURES FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

If regional disparity in development is the major factor that is operative in the articulation of regional and sub-regional identities and

demand for separate statehood, the issue has to be effectively addressed. It would be appropriate here to ask how far the various efforts of national development have succeeded in reducing regional inequality. In 1956 the industrial policy resolution of the government of India asserted that only by securing a balanced and coordinated development of the industrial and agricultural economy in each region could the entire country attain higher standards of living. There have been planning exercises to reduce inter-state disparities and give preferential treatment to poor states. Beside the state-specific efforts for reducing intra-state regional disparities, a number of centrally sponsored programmes have been in operation for the last two-three decades for taking care of the specific needs of backward regions. The Tribal Development Programme, the Hill Area Development Programme, the Western Ghats Development Programme, the Drought Prone Area Programme and Desert Development Programme are examples of such efforts. Non-government organisations also have been playing their role in the development of socially and economically deprived areas. Overall there has been economic growth in all states; but the rates of growth in different states have been highly differential, further widening inter-state disparities. It may be realistic to say that improvement in regional development has been marginal, and regional inequality in terms of per capita income continues to remain a salient feature of Indian economy.

The pressing requirement of the backward states, prone to sub-regionalism for separate statehood, is more investment in their social and infrastructure sectors. To improve the level of social services, massive investment in primary education and primary health services are required. Improvement in the basic infrastructure facilities like power, irrigation, transport and telecommunication in backward states is a precondition for improving the quality of life of the people and to usher in sustainable economic development in those states. Public investment by the government in major industries such as steel, fertilizers, oil refining, petrochemicals, machine making, heavy chemicals, power and irrigation projects, roads and railways, post offices and other facilities has been a tool for the reduction of regional inequality. Government incentives have been provided to the public sector to invest in backward areas through subsidies, tax concessions, and institutional loans at subsidised rates.

Regional planning has to be taken up more seriously. Regional planning is not mere physical planning, but includes integrated and coordinated planning of physical, economic and social components in a given region. Smaller states still need good and vibrant administration to achieve success in the developmental efforts. Policies should be aimed at industrialisation of lagging regions and for providing infrastructure facilities such as transport, communications etc. in backward regions. Even though the climate, geography, rates of educated people, migration etc. play an important role in the socio-economic growth of a region, disparities can be reduced considerably by the coordinated efforts of the centre, state and local self-governments. National policy makers need to be concerned about integrating all state economies effectively for the free movement of factors of production. States need to consider seriously liberalising the land and labour markets by appropriately changing laws and policies.

If the existing trends in differential rates of socio-economic development continue, regional disparities in India are bound to accentuate. Therefore, it is imperative that the present trends are arrested and preferably reversed. This will require concerted efforts on the part of the concerned state and central governments. Resources may be a major constraint, but not necessarily the only or even the most important one. The determination on the part of the state governments, the ruling elite and the people at large is even more important. Centre's helping hand in the form of focused investment, especially in social and key infrastructure sectors will facilitate the tasks of the concerned states. Transfer of resources from centre to state through Planning Commission and Finance Commission, and discretionary grants should have a bias in favour of backward states. Meaningful decentralisation in decision making and financial powers with appropriate accountability at all levels will facilitate faster socio-economic development of the backward regions where people are likely to take up considerable share of the developmental responsibilities.

There are both formal institutional and informal political arrangements for centre-state coordination (Majeed 2010). Among the formal mechanisms are Planning Commission, Finance Commission,

National Development Council, Inter-State Council, National Integration Council, Zonal Council Tribunal for adjudicating specific disputes, and various commissions and committees to look into specific disputes between the centre and states. The informal mechanisms include ministerial and departmental meetings, and conferences of constitutional functionaries and political executives, such as Governors and Chief Ministers, that are convened by the President or Prime Minister. Such informal mechanisms may evolve conventions of governance on questions of state rights, inter-state trade and commerce, sharing of river water, inter-state communication and such other matters.

While natural resources are spatially located they have wider national significance. Resource federalism can be strengthened through creation of more independent bodies to determine issues related to centre-state interests, expansion of the space for local governance, improved compensation and sharing of resources and revenues, and enhancement of the capacity of local institutions. Fiscal decentralisation involves devolution of taxing and spending powers to lower levels of governance. The 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution have paved the way for effective demarcation of the functions and resources within states to local self-government. If the panchayat raj institutions are allowed to function with responsibility, considerable ground can be covered to reduce regional disparities within states. Both larger and smaller states will continue to be badly governed until there is effective devolution of funds and functions to local self-government.

In a complex and large multi-ethnic nation like India, no reorganisation of states can produce internally homogeneous, and administratively and financially viable set of states in all cases. Hence, endless fragmentation of the states is not the solution to India's problem of regional disparity, but a part of the problem of un-governability and instability. Effective devolution of authority and funds, along with a sincere and conscious participation from the people at the grassroots, will have a significant impact in reducing regional backwardness, and thereby reducing the tendency to demand separate statehood.

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