CHAPTER: I

INTRODUCTION

Region and Regionalism:

The term 'region' denotes a geographical area which posses certain homogenous characteristics that distinguish it from adjacent areas or other regions.\(^1\) As a political concept, the word region has traditionally been mainly used to refer to major historic sub-divisions of the larger national states or of the administrative provinces. It is a part of a larger whole and a complex of interrelationship. Within any given region the elements of society will arrange themselves in a pattern, a configuration which is peculiar to that region and which gives it a character of uniqueness.\(^2\) In other words a region can be defined as an unit in the sense that its people are bounded together economically and socially more intimately than with the people of other adjacent regions or areas. As such it is an area with common characteristics that set it off from other areas. That apart a region is a socio-cultural concept, which represents more of an analytical category than geographical entity. The socio-cultural dimension of a geographical set up helps developing the sense of loyalty to a particular region within a given broader socio-political system. It reflects by and large in a regional movement.

The concept of regionalism in its Political sense carries a wide variety of -connotations. Like other political terms, regionalism has in the recent past been quite successful in securing as an addendum to contemporary thought and maneuvering in practical politics.\(^3\)
Regionalism in its general and literary sense means loyalty and attachment to one's own region and readiness to do all that is required for its all round development. Regionalism, which is in a sense regional consciousness develops from a sense of identity with a geographical area homogeneous in certain selected defining criteria. It is a social reality that encourages the cult of local patriotism.

Regionalism, which demands individual's loyalty to one's region represents a force and sentiment which groups of people inhabiting a particular region posses and display collectively. No doubt, psychological factor which reflects and creates regional consciousness deserves due consideration. Yet regionalism cannot be conceived or described, as mere feeling, for this feeling is something more than the state of mind. It has certain inherent principles and, therefore, a theory of its own which explains the causes for and growth of regional consciousness. Factors, which lay at root of regionalism, are economic or class interest but certain ethnic factors such as cultural, traditional or linguistic peculiarities play an important role in consolidating people developing the feeling and consciousness of oneness. Accordingly people, consciously concerned with the political, economic and social needs develop community spirit. The community interests and the sense of solidarity springs from the sense of common interests and shared experience. The feeling of oneness is generally due to regional language, and uniform cultural, historical traditions. People, deprived of their due, are usually inspired by such a kind of doctrine and consequently they struggle for the autonomy like status within a broader system of national polity.
Regionalism may be in form of a mechanism for preserving language and culture of a particular area and for increasing assertion of the states right as apposed to union government’s power. But regionalism and nationalism are not antithetical to each other. It would be a blunder to view every regional demand as anti-national, because a nation is made up of regions and its health depends on the cohesion rather than on their bitterness and discontent. Conceived in any form, regionalism or sub-regional consciousness is not only a prelude and per-requisite of germane national sentiments, but logically it is generated precisely by the euphoria created by the establishment of a Nation State. Regionalism and sub-regionalism, therefore, are the basic aspects of the very concept of federalism.\textsuperscript{5}

The regional demands are required to be expressed within the legitimate limits subject to their being compatible with the interest of the nation as a whole. It is indeed a difficult task and may not be quite smooth for newly independent people with less political magnitude and experience to draw a line of demarcation or distinction in between what is imperatively national and what is legitimately regional. R.N. Mishra is of the opinion that — "Regionalism in India", a problem for a long time, has become in its present form, a dangerously disruptive phenomenon and a potent threat to national unity and integrity. After independence it has assumed different forms in different parts of India in its extreme form, it has appeared as a violent demand for secession of a particular part of the country from the union of India generating centrifugal forces.\textsuperscript{6}

The theory, ‘Son of the Soil’ is a by-product of regionalism. It is opined that the state Reorganization Commission has done more harm
than positive benefits to the country. It had developed linguistic nationalism while, on the other hand there developed a kind of schism among different nationalities inhabiting a state. The rise of Shiv Sena in Bombay is an example of parochialism. Targeting non-Maharashtrians particularly South Indians driving them out of the city of Mumbai just to secure Employment and educational development to the locals or the natives. Similarly, the rise of Gopala Sena in Kerala, Lachit Sena in Assam are wild illustrations, may be viewed as a potent factor projecting the element of sub-nationalism, a potential threat to Indian nationalism. It may also be added that the existence of the Mulky rules for the Telangana region in Andhra Pradesh may be mentioned as a focal issue for the raise of Andhra agitations in 1972-73 for the bifurcation of the state. The development of the theory of Sons of the Soil is a unique phenomenon in Indian context, adversely effecting the cause of national integration.

Inter state disputes are also viewed as another dimension of economic regionalism, which surfaced after 1960. These disputes are the results of two factors - one is related to boundaries and another to utilization of river water. The disputes resulting from these two factors have been responsible for bitterness between the contending state, and there by fomenting regional spirit.

Territorial identity is the basis of regionalism. The territorial communities and other interested groups of specific territories are present in all political systems. In a federal political set-up, territorial communities are its basic components. By territorial interest groups we mean aggrandizement of individuals and groups who are aware of their
bonds of identification with each other as well as with the past, present and future of these territory.7

Regionalism in India continues to be a vague phenomenon. While it moves in positive terms, for self-identity and self-fulfillment on the part of an area, negatively it reflects a psyche of deprivations. Regionalism can be mentioned as a multi-dimensional phenomenon based on geo-cultural, political and economic and above all psychic. The factor of boundaries to which the people of an area are attached emotionally usually reflects their identity. History of a region is another important dimension, which buttresses regionalism by way of cultural heritage, folklore, myths and even symbolism. The third important factor of regionalism is that of caste and the last factor is that of language and nationality politics in India which is perhaps the most important aspect of group identification.

Although territorial, cultural, economic and ethnic dimensions of regionalism are quite significant, yet political dimension is more important of all these. It may be contended that the sum total of various manifestations of regionalism such as in economic an ethnicity is amalgamated in the political dimension of regionalism. The political leadership or the political elite more often tends to mobilize by and large the people on linguistic, religious, cultural or economic issues whipping up their sentiments. All these are apparently made use for acquisition of political powers and legitimacy. In this context the regional parties, have made use of such political factors, obviously for political gains. They have not only continued to mobilize masses, recruit party activists, but also successfully captured political power among a
few states of India. To maintain the DMK in Tamilnadu, which came to power for the first time in the 1967, continues significantly its sphere of influence even now. The AIDMK, which is part of the fraternity of DMK, had been in power in Tamilnadu. The national parties including the premier Indian National Congress have reconciled to the existence of either the DMK or AIDMK- twiddle due and twiddle dum - and continue to make rapprochement with them quite often on electoral politics similar to that of the Akali Dal and the Mizo National Front. It is pertinent to mention that the political dimension of regionalism has been quite crucial and even significant for the rise of the sub-regional movements among states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar and in north eastern India. It is a fact that several union territories have taken the shape of full fledge statehood. Mention may also be made of the Manipur, Tripura and Goa, which have been accorded the status of statehood. The political ramifications of the regionalism are quite far reaching and at times they demanded radical or wholesale transform the political map of India. The rise of Telgu Desam party in Andhra Pradesh in 1983 as compared to the DMK in Tamilnadu is another patent dimension of the regionalism. The party thrives on linguistic, cultural, dimension of regionalism and take a position of more autonomy to the state and with the trust on radical changes in the union-state relationship in India. The party supermo Mr. N.T. Rama Rao, the chairman of the national front composed of Janta Dal, Assam Gana Parishad, Telgu Desam party and DMK contested mainly on the issue of center state relations and the greater freedom and autonomy to the states of India.
The roots of the regionalism lies deeper in the consciousness of a separate identity derived from the multitudinal factors - political and the administrative which in turn produce an aggressive regional loyalty. Ambitious political elements too orient the economic differences and try to mobilize the attitudes and feelings of the people on this score towards the demand for separate states.

A small separate state would offer them the possibilities for feathering their political ambitions. It may be pointed out that the continued neglect of regions and the absence of planned growth and uneven economic development, there will be a possibility of such ambitious and selfish politicians to make use of such of phenomenon to strengthen the cause of regionalism.

Regional Political Parties In India:

The party system in India has developed on lines quite dissimilar to those which are seen in western democracies. India does not fall in the category of England, U.S.A. where a stable two party system has developed. However, Indian party system can not be described as one party system as in the case with the U.S.S.R, China and Yugoslavia where virtually the communist parties dominated and eliminated all meaningful and effective opposition. Indian party system resembles the French and Italian political system where many parties function. It is a well-established fact that the multi party system has an inherent tendency towards political instability. Another important feature of Indian party system is the existence of various types of parties. Parties are free to take birth and die. Nothing is mentioned about political
parties in the constitution. Whenever general elections are announced several parties emerge together to contest poll to gain power. There are national or all India parties that have roots relatively in different parts of the country. There are Congress, Bharatiya Janta Party, Communist Party, etc. Besides there are regional parties like Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), National Conference, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, APHLC, Naga National Council, Mizo National council, Mizo National Front, Telgu Desam Party, Assam Gana Parishad, Maharashtra Gomantak People’s Party, People Party of Arunachal Pradesh, Shiva Sena in Maharashtra etc. These regional parties confine their influence and area of operation to their respective state. Some of the regional parties have been retaining power for a long time like the DMK, AIADMK, National conference and Telgu Desam Party etc. There parties have also contested National Elections and won sizeable number of seats in Loksabha from their states.

Ever since the independence many regional political parties have emerged in India and gained significant influence in the regions. The growth of regionalism and regional parties has been hailed by some political observers on the ground that the more regional parties come to power; the less will be the imbalance between the center and states. It is claimed that regional parties would be better able to understand regional hopes and aspirations.9

India is a multi-lingual and a multi-cultural nation. The linguistic and cultural diversities give rise to separatist tendencies. The people living in a particular linguistic region tend to identify and attach
themselves with that region. Political parties also try to exploit the ethnic and cultural factors for political gains in the competitive politics. In a different sense, uneven development of regions also brings a sense of discrimination and alienation leading to the formation of regional parties.

Some small regional parties were generally formed due to factionalism in the Congress and other parties and were merged with the parent parties when accommodated in the power circles. Some of them had no particular ideology except to gain power. Most of such parties were headed by disgruntled leaders of the major parties without any cadres and proper organisation.\textsuperscript{10}

Since the first general elections in 1951-52 the Indian political system has experienced the emergence of several regional and Sub-regional political parties. In a majority of cases these parties came into existence because of the excessive Centralism and monopolistic politics of the Congress.\textsuperscript{11} Particularly after the Fourth General elections in 1967 the regional parties played a crucial role in some of the states.

The growth of regional parties in India seems to have had significant impact upon its political and constitutional set up. The formation of governments on their own by some of them in a few Indian states and the coalition governments in some other states were the developments of far reaching consequences. Despite their limited range of concerns and their limited pool of potential supporters, regional parties play an important role in national, state and local politics. The national government of Indira Gandhi, for instance depended, to some extent, on support from Tamilnadu’s Dravida
Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in the Lok Sabha between 1969 and 1971 to maintain a Congress majority. The government of Morarji Desai relied on support from the Akali Dal and the DMK during its election campaign of 1977 and one member of Desai’s first Cabinet was of Akali Dal. Both the DMK and All – India DMK – a more leftist offshoot of the DMK – led governments in Tamil Nadu, while the Akali Dal led governments in Punjab. Several other states, including Bihar, West Bangal and Kerala had Coalition governments that counted regional parties among their members.¹²

Such a development challenged the phenomenon of one party dominance of Indian National Congress in India. The Congress government at the Center not attuned to the idea of non- Congress parties ruling in states, tended to create all types of obstacles for them and to topple them by hook or by crook. The latter, in the face of such hostile stance of the center, demanded more powers for themselves with a view to ensure their survival. In course of time, some states, have also clamoured for more powers for states. Thus the tilt of Indian federation towards the centre has been subjected to severe criticism and serious debate largely due to the emergence of regional parties.

The Regional Parties could be regarded as the by- product of religious, linguistic, economic, cast, ethnic, and sectarian identities standing on juxtaposition to that of national loyalties. The emergence of regional parties extending loyalty and solidarity on regional sentiments on the grounds mentioned above may be viewed as antithetical to national priorities and national identities. It is a fact that the regional parties thrive mostly on regionalism, Sub- regionalism, yet they project
the spirit of federal character. Rise of regional parties may be regarded as the by-product of political, social and economic modernization. In a pluralist society and heterogeneous polity, such as India, it is inevitable for the rise of regional parties.

Myron Wiener broadly classified India’s political parties in to four groups: They are

(a) Democratic secular parties, for example, Congress, Socialist Parties, KMPP and KLP;

(b) Parties opting for Soviet or Chinese models for example, CPI, CPM, Bolshevik, RSP, Peasants and Workers Party;

(c) Parties identifying themselves with Indian traditions for inspiration, for example, Jan Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha, Rama Rajya Parishad, etc.

(d) Parties which are different to constitutional frame work, but primarily concerned with the provincial and communal interests, for example, Akali Dal, Scheduled Caste federation, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, Muslim league, and other similar formations.

It is commented that many factors have been responsible for the rise and growth of these regional parties. It would be appropriate to mention that India being a land of regions with several diversities, the regional formations are bound to take shape for accomplishing the demands of regional sentiments. The All India Congress party, a powerful organisation until 1990’s, could counter such regional and sub-regional forces while maintaining India’s unity and integrity. However, with the decline of Congress or communists ever since 1980’s the regional organisation began to surface India’s political map and mange to seize political power in various states in Indian Union. It is
also noticed that these regional parties have been able to strengthen their position by exploiting the issues relating to local, regional and sub-religion grievances.

It is pertinent to mention that the rise of regional parties is the result of failure of national parties to command political legitimacy and secure political support from the Indian masses, therefore, the vacuums created by the National parties through loss of political patronage is filled by the growing regional parties in Indian State. Therefore it is commented by political observers that the manifestations of regional and sub-regional political groupings should not be viewed as antithetical to national perspective though they thrive on regionalism and sub-regional spirit, yet they tend to put of nationalism. The strength of India largely lies in the strength and viability of the respective region and sub-regions of India. So long as the regional parties do not indulge in communalism, secessionism and disintegrative factors their presence is justified. However, if they tend to indulge in factors mentioned above their presence would pose a threat to the national integration.

India having a composite and plural set up is bound to face the rise of regional and sub-regional expression for fulfillment of various factors, at times, regional and sub-regional parties indulge in extreme to moderate actions causing tension to structure of the society is the nature of Indian polity. Besides few regional groupings appeared fissiparous, demanding balkanization of Indian Union. In this context, it is justifying to note that the central leadership more or less acted with imaginative foresight and commendable wisdom and recognizing few
legitimate demands of the regional parties and rejecting a few other though they have caused abundance of concern to the Union government. The political system and the ruling elite perceived such problems in its depth and attempted to resolve such challenges which ultimately provided for further federalizing process since those demands for secession were certainly extreme and stood in juxtaposition to the federal polity. Therefore the Central Government ruthlessly curbed and resolved the issue through greater political and economics decentralization. Similarly the linguistic and cultural forces were also internalised in a healthy manner through recognition of 15 regional languages as the official languages in the country. Besides the redrawing political map of India in 1956 on linguistic lines and creation of certain states in North-East India can still be viewed in this perspective. Ethnic regionalism asserted by tribal foces were also resolved quite satisfactorily through process of institutional framework to accommodate their interests. It is held by political scientists like Samuel P. Huntington, Devid Apter, James Coleman and Milton J. Eastman that various challenges of regional and sub-regional manifestations are inevitable phenomenon of developing nations.

K. R. Bombival very rightly observes: “No academic endeavour to analyse or evaluate the dynamics of Indian’s politics can be valid if it ignores what may be described as regional perspective and fails to take adequate account of the increasingly critical role played by regional political parties.”

The leaders of sub-regional formations have focused in their propaganda on regional imbalances neglect of sub-regions in matters of
economic development while laying emphasis on the development of the country by central government. The most volatile leaders of sub-regional parties have quite often exploited the sentiments and regional emotions and thereby successfully captured political power in some of the states of India. Furthermore the rise and growth of regional parties has also contributed to strengthening primordial loyalties sustained by ethnic and communal (castes) forces. Such regional formations have however confined to their respective states and could not broaden their scope to other parts of the country. As a result of such cumulative effect of these factors, the regional parties have been playing a significant role in the Indian’s political system in the recent past. Added to the above, these regional parties could successfully rise to power in some of the states of India because the national parties have declined considerably and failed to secure support from the states citizenry. The decline of national party-Congress and vacuum of political influence created there by had been occupied by the regional parties in respective regions of India.\textsuperscript{15} It has also been noticed that these regional parties have tactfully managed to make electoral alliances with that of all India political parties being in apposition to National Congress and thereby secured a kind of legitimacy in their respective states. In recent times, these parties have been playing a very active role and tended to be quite catalytic in the functioning of the coalition Governments at the center. In this context a reference may even be made to National Front of 1989, United Front of 1996 and later the NDA and also UPA. It is significant to add that the some regional parties and then leaders have now gathered enough political clout in the making of union Government under a new pattern of coalition politics. In this
context, a reference may be made to the role of Andhra Pradesh who had successfully exercised enormous influence over the center in making and un-making of the Prime Ministers of India, belonging to united Front which was composed of 14 different constituent units. As the politics is mainly a study of political power and struggle for power, the national and secular parties have un-hesitatingly made efforts to make pre-poll and post-poll alliances and thereby assume political power. Such arrangements and recent developments are an eye-opener to indicate that the regional parties have been gaining abundance of strength and political legitimacy in India. Added to the above, support of certain national political parties to some of the regional parties following political alliances in the recent past also accord considerable credibility to such phenomenon. In the recent past, the CPI in its manifesto demanding re-structuring of center State relations on a democratic basis is illustrative of its support to the regional parties. Even the CPI (M) has been emphasizing that a strong center which is necessary for India is possible only if it is backed by strong states armed with sufficient powers to carry out their task without fear of intervention from the center. Even the BJP in its manifesto has observed that Indian constitution is quasi-federal which envisages strong states with a strong center.

**Regional Parties:**

To understand regionalism, it is necessary to study diverse socio-economic roots of various regional movements that originated in different historical contexts. These movements/parties have originated in different periods of history in response to the urges of different
section of society in their respective regions. At the same time, each party/movement had undergone significant qualitative demand to another over a period of time. For the benefit of discussion, some of the prominent regional movements/parties such as D.M.K in Tamil Nadu, Akali Dal in Punjab, A.G.P. in Assam, National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir can be examined in brief.

**Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam:**

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam was the first regional party to capture political power in Tamil Nadu. Its style of functioning during the ten years in office, raised many issues pertaining to our federal structure. In 1949 under the leadership of C.N. Annadurai large chunk of the Dravida Kazhagam (D.K) came out of the mother party and formed the D.M.K. The inspiration behind this party was E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker, who waged an uncompromising fight against the cast system, Brahmin domination and Aryan culture. In 1924, Naicker resigned from the secretary-ship of the Madras Presidency Congress Committee over an incident in which segregation was observed between Brahmans and non-Brahmins while serving the food. In 1925, he left the congress and declared that “hereafter my work is to dissolve the Congress.” In Naicker’s personality there were two constant traits. He was an atheist as no communist could ever claim, he was also anti Brahmin as no non-Brahmin could ever became. He insisted people to kill Brahmans and burn their houses. A proverb chalked out on the walls though out Tamil Nadu at the time, proclaimed, “When you meet a Brahmin and a snake, kill the Brahmin first.”

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In its earlier phase DMK wanted to achieve an independent South Indian Dravidian State, which should have included the state of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Travancore-Cochin. This goal of Dravidastan was advocated by Annadurai and his lieutenants until the beginnings of the sixties. DMK on 5th June, 1960 organized a joint campaign throughout Madras State for the secession of Madras from India for making it an independent sovereign state of Tamil Nadu. It contested the third General election to the State Assembly on this issue, and won 50 seats. After the aggression of China a change in the party’s attitude became apparent. The DMK was confronted with a wave of nationalism in the country and shelved the issue of Dravidastan in favor of day-to-day issues. It has concentrated its efforts on fighting the Imposition of Hindi on the south.

Consequent to the demand of the DMK, the union government enacted in 1963, the 16th Constitutional Amendment which enabled Parliament to make laws providing penalties for any person questioning the sovereignty and integrity of the Indian Union.

In the Fourth General elections held in 1967, it came to power by winning a majority of seats in the assembly and remained in power till 1977. The DMK, which stood for an independent Southern state and stoutly resisted the Northern domination, between 1969 and 1971 unreservedly, supported the Indian Government. It was the main instrument conveniently used by the Congress to prevent Kamaraj from regaining his lost place and position in national politics. Dissolving the legislature a year earlier than the expiry of its term, the DMK faced the electorate in 1971 and was returned to power again with an absolute majority.
After the elections, the differences that existed between M. G. Ramchandran, a popular cine star and the treasurer of the party and M. Karunanidhi, resulted into major rift in the DMK. Both of them are associated with the film industry in one way or another, and some of the reasons underlying their discord have arisen from this background. Ramchandran objected to Karunanidhi’s ways of dealing with his party colleagues and was critical of the mismanagement of the party funds and the corruption rapidly spreading in the party hierarchy. A generous donor for public cause, Ramchandran had been the backbone of the DMK’s financial strength, especially in its adverse days. He accused Karunanidhi of dictatorship and demanded that an independent enquiry should be conducted in to the assets of the DMK legislators including ministers.

Birth of AIADMK:

On October 10, 1972 at the behest of Karunanidhi and Nadunchezhiyan, M. G. Ramchandran was suspended from the party. The reason for the suspension, was to prevent him from scrutinizing the party accounts. He later made a demand for a judicial probe into the assets of the DMK functionaries and their relatives. He also charged that there had been an organized and sustained conspiracy to throw him out of the party from 1971 by framing false charges and to undermine his popularity and influence among the people in the party and also in the film world. To his tremendous popularity, the suspension added enormous public sympathy. The MGR manrams were resentful at the action taken against their hero and roused to their leader’s call.
On October 17, 1972, MGR announced that the DMK units loyal to him would form themselves into a new party. The Anna DMK urged the student wing supporting them to function under the name Anna Dravida Manavar (Students) Munnetra Kazhagam. He described the MGR Manrams and the loyal party units as the “Two eyes” of the new party. October 18, 1972, heralded the birth of the Anna DMK Ramchandra declared that his party would faithfully follow the principals and policies laid down by the late C.N. Annadurai. The constitution of the party was issued on 29th September 1973 almost a year after the party came into being. It declared that the integrity of the Indian sub-continent is the crux of the party’s political policies. On the issue of language, the Anna DMK stands in the vanguard of the opposition to Hindi at the country’s sole official language.

All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) came to power in the 1977 elections to the assembly and remained in power until MGR’s death in 1988. In the month of September 1985 there was a split in the AIADMK party. The split in the AIADMK has led to the formation of a splinter party. The Anna DMK (ADMK) S. D. Somasundaram was the founder of this party who was a Cabinet Minister in M. G. Ramchandran’s ministry over the years. Somasundaram was stripped off important portfolios like commercial taxes, revenue and excise. When the Revolt did take place, Somasundaram became a symbol around whom the disgruntled elements of the AIADMK gathered. Two MLA’s joined Somasundaram’s ADMK from AIADMK. However, this break did not have the potential to weaken the strength of AIADMK. Somasundaram
was critical of MGR's administrative capabilities as a chief minister. At
the party level, Somasundaram's allegation was that MGR was a
dictator. Somasundaram had differences with MGR. MGR's handling of
the Sri Lanka Situation, which people believed was insincere and the
fact that MGR conferred extra-constitutional powers on Jayalalita, a cine
actress, were issues that had popular endorsement.

Shiromani Akali Dal:

Another most important regional party is Shiromoni Akali Dal. Its roots go back to a powerful Sikh movement in Punjab in the pre-
independence, called Akali Dal movement. The Akalis are a part of the Sikh community who established in 1920 the Shiromani Akali Dal to
force the government for making suitable legislation for the management of Gurudwaras. They emerged as a very powerful religio-
political force. Under the Sikh Gurudwara Act, 1925. The Shiromani
Gurudwara Prabhandak committee (SGPC) was constituted. It is the
supreme – religious body of the Sikhs. It is believed that whoever
controls SGPC controls Sikh Politics.

The Sikh community under the leadership of Master Tara Singh,
demanded during the freedom struggle, an independent State of Khalistan.
After the independence, Tara Singh demoted a Sikh State consisting of the Gurgaon district of Punjab, Patiala and the East Punjab state union.
However, the extreme demand of Khalistan was modified, and instead a
demand was made for a separate Punjabi speaking state within the Indian
union. This demand of 'Punjabi Suba' was conceded by the center on 1st
November 1966. Thus, the former east Punjab was divided into two states-
Punjab and Haryana. However, the Akali leadership was not free from factional groups. A section of Akali owing allegiance to Sant Fateh Singh revived the idea of a Sikh ‘Home land’. One of the Central secretaries, Dr. Jagjit Singh, toured several countries to mobilize Sikh opinion in favor of Sikhistan. However, this attempt did not receive much support and favour from the Sikhs. Then the Akali leadership, like the DMK, started demanding decentralization of political power and granting of greater state Autonomy. The President of SGPC, Guru Charan Singh Tohra, M.P. said that, “Powers should be transferred to the states except subjects like External Affairs, Defense and Communication. He alleged that the centre was discriminating against the people of Punjab.

Again in recent times, extremist of the Akalis began to talk of Sikh nation or Khalistan. Some of these leaders were Randir Singh Cheema, Dr. Jagjit Singh and Harchand Singh Longowal. On 13th April 1973 the conference at Anandpur Sahib adopted a Resolution which is known as “Anandpur Sahib Resolution” The resolution contains the following demands.

A) To Accord the status of a holy City to Amritsar.
B) Extending an independent autonomous broadcasting service to the Holy Temple.
C) Transfer of the disputed territories to Punjab.

The extremist groups of Akalis have been indulging in violence, arson, sabotage and murders demanding the enactment of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. The crisis in Punjab has become very critical and a grave concern to the nation as a whole. As far as the programmes of Akali Dal was concerned, it began with Punjabi Suba in early 50’s. It
focused on protection of refugees, reservation of jobs for Sikhs, protection of depressed classes on par with Harijans, equitable distribution of national wealth, control on means on production and distribution, land reforms with no compensation to landlords. The party pleaded exemption of land-holdings up to ten acres in payment of land revenue, abolition of betterment levies, assured water and electricity to farmers and whole sale trade in food grains. Furthermore the party promised abolition of excise duties, reducing the fertilizer’s prices, abolition of zones and restrictions on movement of Agricultural products in the Country etc. Thus the programmes touched on all socio-economic and political aspects.

**Assam Gana Parishad:**

The ascendancy of AGP to political power dates back to 1985 in Assam. Initially Assam witnessed two groups of Students Unions one led by All Assam students union and the other All Assam Gana Parishad. They were spearheading agitation on the basic issue of migration of foreigners from the neighboring country, Bangladesh and few others from North-east. The natives were sore with the economic backwardness of the Assam and the inflow of refugees making permanent settlement, seeking Indian citizenship and securing all the benefits to the detriment of natives. The agitations by these students organizations had a tremendous effect on the peace and stability on the borders of north-eastern parts of India. The agitators mainly demanded identification of foreign nationals, either expel them or rehabilitate them in other parts of India.
Consequently the state witnessed large scale violence, arson, loot and breakdown of law and order. The union government held several rounds of talks with the office bearers of the above organizations. Efforts in this direction were made in between 1984-85, which ultimately resulted in conclusion of meaningful results. Around 15th of August 1985 an accord was concluded between the Government of India and the leaders of agitation.

Following this Agreement, the two organizations merged in to Assam Gana Parishad surfacing in the form of a political party. In the elections held to the State Assembly during 1985 the AGP came out victorious and formed Government under the leadership of Prafulla Kumar Mahanta. Once again in 1989 the party was returned to power, but later it had to face an electoral debacle. In the recent past, elections were held in Assam. The AGP once again secured political power and formed Government under the leadership of Mahanta.

The party mainly emphasized the implementation of accord in regard to foreign nationals and announced its endeavour for the economic development of the state. A few more programmes outlined by Assam Gana Parishad are as below:25

1) Establishment of a progressive society, free from exploitation based on political equality, economic development and social justice.

2) Achievement of democracy, socialism and secularism, striving for peace, progress and social harmony and integration and promotion of these causes among the people.

3) Securing more rights for the states and a real federal union.
4) Full utilization of Assam’s natural resources in the interests of all round benefits for the people and on that basis striving to strengthen the economic foundation of Assam.

5) Equal Opportunities for all in the field of education, introduction of vocation-oriented education, ensuring autonomy in the sphere of higher education, Strengthening the understanding and goodwill among different ethnic groups and sections of people and adoption of all measures for the development of indigenous languages, arts and culture.

6) Promotion of Scientific temper in the society in order to keep pace with future industrial development in the field of transport and communications.

7) Balanced agriculture and industrial development and extension of special benefit to indigenous cultivators and local entrepreneurs, protection of forests and reserved areas and adoption of measures for cultivation of fallow lands to increase productivity.

8) Restructuring State plans so that the benefits of planned economy serve the interest of the poorest sections of the society and thus ensure maximum welfare for the people of Assam.

9) In order that national and international problems may be faced appropriately to seek to extend co-operation with all democratic, secular and such other political parties as opposed to regional imbalance and respect the legitimate rights of small nationalities, such co-operation should depend upon merits or issues, and

10) To seek to build up unity and action with all like minded parties of the northern States for facing problems of common concern.
National Conference:

The All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim conference founded in 1931 under the leadership of Shaikh Abdullah who was the founder leader and even architect of the party, was converted in to National conference in 1939, so as to enable non-Muslim also to become its members. From its inception, the conference has been agitating for popular participation in the state’s administration. In 1936 the party demanded responsible Government under the Maharaja, but in 1944 it declared that it stood for the abolition of the Maharaja’s rule and for the establishment of a socialist society.

The leader of the national conference Sheikh Abdullah, contended that Kashmir was sold in 1846 to Raja Gulab Sing of Jammu by the Sikh rulers of the Punjab for Rs. 7.5 million to raise resources to pay war reparation to the British, and his successors had no right tenable in a democratic age to ruler over the Kashmiries. The National Conference, therefore, in May 1946 launched a ‘Quit Kashmir’ movement against the ruling family, which, however, was unsuccessful.

In October, 1947 the Pakistani forces attacked Kashmir. As the invaders were marching towards Shrinagar, the Maharaja on October 26, took the decision to accede the state to India and Abdullah was called upon to head an emergency administration which was replaced by a popular interim government with Abdullah as a Chief Minister on March, 1948. And on October 12, 1948, the working Committee of the National Conference unanimously voted for the permanent accession of the state to India.
The leaders of the National Conference have tactfully fomented cast communal and regional feelings and sentiments and exploited the people and the political situation to their advantage. The party has been ruling the state from very beginning except from 1965 to 1975.

Shaikh Abdullah was imprisoned on August 9, 1953 for his anti-Indian attitude. Most of his supporters left the National Conference and setup the Plebiscite front.

Redeemed from the control of Abdullah, the National Conference came under the domination of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, who on becoming the Chief Minister in succession to Abdullah, tried to create a power structure conducive to his continuance through personalization, nepotism, intimidation and manipulation. He captured all the political initiative and concentrated in himself the leadership of the cabinet, legislature and party. In the elections of 1957, the National conference under Bakshi retained 68 out of the 75 sets in the Assembly.

Difference, however, cropped up in the national conference, and the dissidents at clear leftist leanings led by Ghulam Mohammed Sadique had come into open conflict with Bakshi whose government they charged with corruption, nepotism and suppression of civil liberties. They left the party, and on September 6, 1957, founded the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic National Conference (DNC).

The Democratic National conference held that Kashmir was an integral part of India and the accession of the State to India was irrevocable. It demanded that the fundamental rights embodied in the constitution of India should be guaranteed to the people of Kashmir and the extension of the Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the
election commission, to the state. The division in the National Conference was viewed discouragingly by the Central leaders of the Congress and in November 1960 as a result of their efforts, Ghulam Mohammed Sadique announced that the DNC would rejoin the National Conference.

In accordance with the Kamaraj Plan, Bakshi resigned from the premiership and on October 12, 1963, he was succeeded by Khwaja Shamsuddin. In the political communication created by the theft of a hair-relic of prophet Mohammed Shamsuddin, was replaced on February 28, 1964 by Ghulam Mohammed Sadique as Chief Minister. In July 1964 the National conference merged with the Kashmir branch of the congress.

After obtaining an acceptable position for Kashmir in the union of India through negotiations, Shaikh Abdullah was reinstalled in power after 22 years in the wilderness. When Shaikh Abdullah died, his son Farooque Abdullah succeeded him according to a carefully planned dynastic arrangement. Farooque also followed the path of confrontation. He had been removed from power an July 1984. Though it was a serious blunder to have replaced him by G.M. Shah, who is known for his hostility to the center and his bluntly communal approach. 26

However in the month of November 1986 G.M. Shah was removed and Farooque Abdullah was reinstated as Chief Minister of Central Government. As a man who had pledged two years ago “Never to become a slave of the center,” Said “I am a different person now. These 28 months have changed me.” 27 He further said that “in Kashmir
if I want to run a government, I have to stay on the right side of the center. That is a hard political reality I have come to accept.”

Jammu and Kashmir has been in a state of great disorder under the two activities of terrorists and secessionists and the destabilizing role of neighboring country, Pakistan quite frequently in the valley. Both Shaikh Abdullah and his son Dr. Farooque Abdullah to a great extent have been able to contain the secessionist activities and exhilarated a great deal of pragmatism. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has been an integral part of the indestructible India Union. All the secular, nationalist and democratic forces have endorsed to this effect. In brief the leadership of Shaikh Abdullah and his son Dr. Farooq Abdullah had contributed a great deal to put a heavy hand on the activities of Muslim Communal Organisation like Jumat-e-Islami and its student wing Jamat-e-Tulaba. It is commented by observers that by and large Kashmir deserves some measure of autonomy so as to satisfy all sections of the people of this multi-ethnic unit of Indian Union without imparting any impetus to the demand for autonomy raising its ugly head in other parts of the country.

Shiv Sena:

Exploiting Maharashtrian grievances and economic frustration the Shiv Sena under the banner, “Maharashtra for the Maharashtrians”, has directed its attack both verbal and physical, primarily at South Indians. It was founded under the leadership of Bal Thakray in 1966, in Mumbai, with the immediate object of defeating V. K. Krishna Menon in the 1967 parliamentary elections from the North-east Bombay
constituency. He was a leading Marathi cartoonist who assumed a formidable posture against the non-Maharashtrians. Especially south Indians. The Shiv-Sena is against outsiders and anti-communist. Its basic objective is to establish its predominance in the metropolitan areas of Maharashtra. It strongly argued in favour of ‘Maharashtra’ for Maharastrians’ in job opportunities.

On the boundary dispute between Maharashtra and Mysore. Shiv Sena launched an agitation and Bal Thakray held out the threat that no central leaders would be allowed to move freely in Bombay unless the border question was settled in favour of Maharashtra. The elder Statesman C. Rajgopal Chari had characterized the Shiv Sena as a “Vicious anti national movement, parochial and violent in spirit”.29

The emergence of the Shiv Sena as a regional political party is regarded as an expression as well as limited success, of the Neo-Hinduism. The Hindutva propounded by Shiv Sena is militant. The Neo-Hinduism of Shiv Sena was percolated among non-Brahmin masses both in urban and rural areas in Maharashtra. The Shiv Sena has come successful in fascinating the unemployed and semi literate younger generations in Maharashtra. The Shiv Sena chief Shri Bal Thakray is a noble working leader. The Shiv Sena under his capable leadership has come to become a successful alternative to the congress in Maharashtra.

The root cause for the emergence for the Shiv Sena initially as a pressure group was the strife between the MPCC and the BPCC. The BPCC objected to the expansion of the activities among the textile mill workers by the RMMS, which was under the control of Vasantdada
Patil. Thus, to expose the cause of the sons of soil, the then Chief Minister Vasantrao Naik patronized the formation of Shiv Sena by Bal Thakray in 1966. The area of operation was confined to Bombay city and adjoining areas. Bal Thakray described the Sena as a volunteer organisation and refused to have any link with politics or political parties. In fact, it was a movement of protest against the dominance of non-Maharashtrains in business and government in Mumbai. Meanwhile, the congress leaders used Sena to destroy the hold of the CPI and its trade unions in the mill areas.

Shiv Sena decided to participate in the Bombay Municipal Corporation in alliance with the PSP and Thane Municipal election on its own strength in 1971. 25 nominees of the Sena were elected on the BMC and it swept Thane Poll. The Sena realized the increasing mass following and decided to contest the Assembly election in Mumbai and around in 1972. However, Sena had to be content with one single victory of Pramod Navalkar. The present Militant Hinduist posture of the Shiv Sena became apparent after 1984. The Sena was involved in the Hindu-Muslim riots of 1984 in Bhiwandi, Kalyan and Mumbai. The clear purpose of these riots was to warm the Muslim community and put it on the defensive. But Thakray has repeatedly expressed that India should be a Hindu nation and in Maharashtra Sena is trying to create its image as the only protector of the Hindus. The Sena promulgates merely virulent attack on Muslims and secularists. It does not propound its views about caste-ism and relations among castes. It simply relies upon vulgar criticism, emotional appeals and the use of force against Muslim enemy and against its own critics. Though the
exact caste composition of the Sena varies from district to district the
member are predominantly non-Brahmin youth. In the last few years, it
has made considerable headway in rural areas. The saffron flag and
branches of the Shiv Sena have been established even in remote rural
areas. The Sena’s mobilizing the Hindus, especially caste Hindus, and is
building communal tension.30

Shiv Sena formed electoral alliance with Bhartiya Janta Party and
has spread its influence throughout Maharashtra. In the recent elections
of October 2004 though it has lost power but it is working efficiently as
an effective opposition party.

Regional Political Parties of Andhra Pradesh:

Like other Indian State Andhra Pradesh experienced the existence
of several political parties. Groups and fronts of regional and sub-
regional dimension at different periods of its political history. Many
had emerged but only a few survived and continued in some form or
the other. Though styled as state parties, most of them owed their origin
to the factionalism of the dominant congress party or some other stable
political parties. They were floated by the frustrated and disgruntled
dissidents of major and minor political parties. Denial of share in
political power gave birth to these local parties Accommodation and
absorption of dissidents into the power circles by the major groups of
parties led to their dissolution. Ideology was not the basis for the rise of
smaller parties. Opportunistic alliances, alignments and power
equations were mainly responsible for the emergence and exit of local
parties. Most of the local and sub-local parties were headed by few
powerful leaders without any cadres or organisations. Membership enrolment was absent. They could not have separate accommodation for the location of their offices. The legislators quarters and the private and personal residence of leaders become party headquarters. Funds were not publicly collected and donations were not openly sought for electioneering and other party expenses. The leaders themselves and their rich followers contributed funds for building the organisation and for fighting elections whenever necessary.

Praja Party, Democratic party, Socialist Democratic Party, National Democratic Party, Peoples Democratic Party, United Democratic Front, Andhra Pradesh Progressive Front, National Democratic Group, Progressive Front, Jana Congress Majlis-e- Ittehadul Muslimeen, Telangana Paraja Samiti, Sampoorna Telangana Paraja Samiti, Telangana Congress, Labour Party, Telangana Congress Forum and Jai Andhra Front were some of the significant regional and sub-regional parties, groups and fronts that existed of different periods in the political history of Andhra Pradesh since its formation in 1956.

**Krishikar Lok Party:**

The Krishikar Lok party was one of the offspring of the disgruntled congressmen. As a vengeance for his defeat in the elections for Congress President in 1951, N.G. Ranga left the congress along with Prakasam and formed the Praja Party.\(^{31}\) Both of them attended the Kissan Mazdoor Praja Party meeting at Patna convened by Kripalani and other dissident Congressman. At the time of the appointment of a sub-committee the name of Prakasam was included and they ignored
the request of Ranga's followers to include his name also in sub-committee. Ranga was disappointed as he was not preferred to Prakasam even in the initial stage. Hence, he left the party and formed the Krishikar Lok Party.

In the general re-elections 1952, the party fielded its candidates including Ranga and his wife, in all-important constituencies and won only 19 seats. None was elected from Krishna and Guntoor where the party was popular.32

Neerakanda Rama Rao was elected on account of his personal reputation from East Godavari. The rest of the 18 seats were from Srikakulam and Vishakhapatnam in one corner of the rest from Chittoar from another corner.33 Timma Reddy and Latchanna were among the important elected candidates. The party played an important role in the Madras Assembly by supporting Rajaji to form the ministry and in turn Rajaji Abolished the control system as promised. Rajaji invited Ranga to join his ministry, but Ranga suggested the name of Timma Reddy and Latchanna. Rajaji declined his offer and commented that Ranga always take wrong decisions at the right movement. Ranga has never appeared to aspire for power with any potential strategies. To aspire power is essential for a leader to keep himself as well as his party up-to-date.34

Sanjeeva Reddy initiated the game of defections in the Andhra Pradesh politics by instigating Timma Reddy to leave KLP and join the congress. After the defection of Timma Reddy, Latchanna became the leader of the legislature party of KLP. After the formation of Andhra State KLP supported the coalition ministry formed by T. Prakasam with
15 ministers and Latchanna was inducted in the ministry on November 7, 1953. However, at the time of the final decision regarding the state capital, Latchanna proposed Vijaywada while the cabinet decided Kurnal. Latchanna resigned from the cabinet on January 2, 1954, as a protest (after 45 days in the cabinet) which led KLP to the opposition benches. On the issue of toddy tappers Latchanna gathered all the forces in the assembly against Sanjeeva Reddy and moved a no confidence motion against the ministry on November 6, 1954, which was carried by one vote. The ministry resigned and presidents Rule was imposed in the state.

In the mid-term poll in 1955, the communist party posed a potential danger to the interests of the congress party in the state. Nehru Convinced Ranga at Delhi to form an electoral alliance with the congress. Ranga accepted the offer. When the KLP meet at Vijayawada, the members opposed the alliance with the Congress However, Ranga convinced the members and KLP joined the united congress front along with Praja Party.35

After the formation of Andhra Pradesh Sanjeeva Reddy did not include the former KLP members in his cabinet. Under the leadership of Latchanna the KLP elements left the UCF along with the other disgruntled Congressmen to form the Democratic Party. This party later emerged as socialist Democratic Party sub-sequent upon joining the group of socialists led by PVG Raju. Later the KLP elements in the SDP left the party to join the newly formed Swatantra Party in 1959 which was led by their former mentor, Ranga who had left the congress to become the President of the Swatantra Party.
Telangana Praja Samiti:

The separatist movements in Telangana metaphorically speaking was regarded as a storm or whirlwind which swept over the region and kept both the state government and the Congress Party almost paralysed for two long years between 1969 and 1971. Started as Mulki-rules implementation agitation, the Telangana Praja Samiti led by Dr. M. Channa Reddy, demanded a separate state for Telangana. M.Channa Reddy who had to resign from Central Cabinet upon his election to the house of the people being invalid by the Supreme Court in 1968, with other disgruntled or disqualified politicians, especially of the Congress, brought in to being the Telangana Praja Samiti (Telangana People’s Conference) in January 1969 to voice a protest against the neglect of the Telangana region by Andhra and to secure a separate statehood for Telangana.

It was alleged that Telanganites were offered neither an opportunity to assume political leadership of the State nor an atmosphere was created for the growth of political leadership in Telangana region. Ever since the formation of Andhra Pradesh, the Chief Minister belonged to either coastal Andhra or Rayalaseema. The Gentlemen’s Agreement stipulated that the positions of the Chief Minister and deputy Chief Minister were to held by Andhra and Telangana Alternatively in the enlarged state of Andhra Pradesh. The first Chief Minister Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, dispensed with the Deputy Chief Minister and compared in to the Sixth finger of a hand. The Telangana leader K.V. Ranga Reddy, however, held the second rank in
the Cabinet. The next Chief Minister, Sanjeevaiah, created the Deputy Chief Ministership and assigned it to K. V. Ranga Reddy in view of his seniority among the Telangana leaders. His successor, Sanjeeva Reddy, reverted to earlier pattern in which though there was no post of Deputy Chief Minister in the Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, the second position was given to a Telangana politician. However, the post was created in July 1969 after the escalation of the agitation and was held by a Telangana leader J.V. Narshing Rao.

Encouraged by the results of a by-elections and Panchayat elections in June 1970, the State council of the Samiti at its meeting held on July 23, 1970 unanimously decided to convert the Samiti into a political party. The move was opposed by Konda Lakshman Bapuji, president of Telangana PCC, who left the Samiti earlier on account of his disagreement with Channa Reddy on the question of leadership. When the Samiti had formally became a political party in January 1971, a rival Samiti emerged as the united front of the people of Telangana on January 10, 1971.

The Samiti decided to contest the mid-term parliamentary elections held in 1971. The Congress High command tried to persuade the TPS leaders to refrain from contesting against the congress. Some of the important TPS leaders including Channa Reddy were invited to Delhi for discussions to avoid confrontation in the election between the TPS and the Congress Party and for evolving a formula for the settlement of the Telangana issue. The rank and file of TPS strongly objected to the very nature of talks with the Prime Minister, rejected her proposals and suspected that Channa Reddy might sabotage the entire movement.
The TPS emerged victorious in the elections by bagging 10 out of 14 seats it contested in Telangana, but got only 47 percent of the total valid votes polled, which was 54 percent of the electorate, with its electoral victory and capacity to mobilise the masses, the Samiti secured the support of the Central leaders to the ouster of the Brahmananda Reddy ministry on September 15, 1971 and to install a government of its choice.

Gratified by their achievement, the Samiti leaders appealed to the people to treat the mid-term elections as an opinion pool on the Telangana issue. After the formation of new ministry at the center the prime minister initiated a dialogue with the TPS leaders for the merger of TPS with congress and for solving the Telangana tangle. The state council unanimously adopted on September 18, 1971 the merger of TPS with Congress. The merger was immediately characterized by the rival Samiti president as a betrayal of the cause of the people of Telangana.

The coming to the power of new regional parties in some parts of the country is the most recent proof of the fact that regionalism has come to stay in India. The growth and dominance of regional and non-Congress (I) parties is almost like a pincer movement. From the northwest, the east, the northeast, the south and the southeast they seem to be advancing on a heartland which is still the domain of the Congress (I).

These parties do not go against national integration. First of all, we have to consider why regional parties have come up. The constitution provides for safeguarding small nationalities. It provides for the balanced social, cultural and economic development of different
areas. But this has not been policy of the central Government so far and that is why we find Telgu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, a DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu or a JMM in Jharkhand. They have come up because their problems have not been talked by national parties and the aspirations of the people have not been Fulfilled. Regional parties take care of these problems and in the process help strengthen the country. Because of this reason more and more state-based parties are coming up in various regions, notwithstanding the Congress – I’s claim that the so-called regional parties will harm national unity and integrity.

The victory of the Telgu Desam in 1983, followed by the success of the Akali Dal in Punjab and the AGP in Assam, show that people’s mood is turning more and more in favor of regional parties. The electoral success of these parties will give a new spurt to the emergence of regional parties in other states too in the years to come.

People are reposing confidence in regional parties because they believe that they alone can safeguard the interest of the state concerned and can fight for the legitimate rights and powers of states without being hamstrung by their association with a national party. A branch of national party cannot put forward a state’s cause very effectively.

According to our constitution, India is a federal polity. After the reorganization of the states on linguistic basis in recognition of the fact that India is a multiracial, multi-lingual nation, it is not correct to misunderstand any party if it speaks in favour of the culture and development of a particular state.

Moreover, regional parties are not a new phenomenon. Several regional parties have been existing in the Country for the last so many
decades. They have held power or are still holding power in many states such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Pondicherry, Jammu and Kashmir, Assam and other states in the North-eastern region. But never before were regional parties dubbed as anti-national or as a threat to the nation's Unity. Only the leaders of the Congress-I party attack regional parties without any basis. They have been speaking as if patriotism is their monopoly.

It is only the anger and frustration of the ruling Congress-I at its crushing defeat in state after State which has led it to resort to such scathing criticism. In the process, it is forgetting that regional parties have come to power with a mandate from the people of their states.

In a federal polity, there is no guarantee that the same party will rule forever at the centre and in the states. Unity does not mean uniformity. Danger to the nation unity will emerge only form the intolerance of Congress-I leaders towards other parties and the governments headed by them. Let us remember that only strong states can make a strong centre and weak limbs can never make a strong body.

Regional parties have been formed essentially to look after the interests of their own states and work for their development. But it is not right to ask them to be confined to their two States without any national programme and perspective.

It is the states that make up a nation a national perspective cannot emerge without the active participation and understanding of the states. Regional parties playing a crucial role in national politics is not a new feature. During 1969-71, when Mrs. Indira Gandhi was running a
minority government, it was the DMK with its 25 members in the Lok Sabha that supported her. In fact, if we analyse the situation today several national parties have only regional jurisdiction while many regional parties are displaying a national outlook. This is a healthy sign and should be encouraged in the interest of the Nation’s unity and integrity. The growing strength of regional parties in the parliament necessarily demands that they actively participate in guiding the nation.
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