INTRODUCTION

India's Constitution envisages a federal mode of organisation. Federalism has been described as a response to the economic, political and social conditions of a society. It is a method of dividing powers at the level of Central and regional governments within a sphere, where they co-ordinate and remain independent. Party system in a Federation grows as an organised response to the needs and demands of the federal System. Thus the relationship between any Federation and Party system is a close and important one.

The study of federalism as a political arrangements adopted for the governance of the country is not new in political writings. The relationship between federalism and party structure presents highly significant issue which have gained in importance in recent years. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the changing emphasis and the contribution of political parties to the changes in the direction of federal structure in India.

Every where in a federation the relation between the provincial and federal government have witnessed tensions despite the existence of a constitutional legal framework.
They are seldom in a static equilibrium. As the demands on political-system increase and it adopts to change, the balance of power shifts and the system strive to work towards a new equilibrium.

Political parties are the main instruments of articulation and aggregation of interests in a political system. The position of political parties on specific issues are shaped by an interplay between their ideology and the realities on the ground. It is thus, natural that the position of the parties on specific issues undergo changes, though such changes may be slow, indistinct and imperceptible. In India, political parties through competition among themselves and by mobilising public opinion on various issues have played an important role in the federalising process. Policies and issues relating to Centre state relations were formulated and decided "not with reference to formalised or constitutional procedures, but rather by a bargaining process which reached a conclusion only after each set of deciders had found out through elections or agitations, what the unknown stage of public reaction was likely to be."² William Ricker has supported this argument by saying-

"Whatever the general conditions, if any that sustain the federal bargain, there is one
institutional condition that controls the nature of the bargain in all the instances. This is the structure of the party system, which may be regarded as the main variable intervening between the back ground. Social conditions and the specific nature of federal bargain."

However, in the initial years of independence, Indian federalism worked without any serious problems. The reason for this was the Congress party's dominances. The Congress party was in power in almost all the states besides Centre since independence to the fourth General Election in 1967. The one party dominance in India had few specific characteristics. Both Rajni Kothari and W.H.Morris Jones have made a seminal contribution in the characterisation of this model of one party dominance in India. In their words-

"The one party dominance system in India admirably accounted for the monopolistic dominance of the one party as well as the openness of the polity due to intra-party factional competition and the latent potency of the opposition groups. The ethics of the National Liberation struggle, the role of the Congress party therein, its resultant identification with the Nation and unchallengable legitimacy, its open umbrella character, its patronage system after independence, its expanding social base due to social co-option and factional competition were factors responsible for the growth of the Congress into a dominant party reflecting a National consensus. At the same time factional competition within the dominant party kept the polity open. The political competition had become an intra-party process instead of inter, party process. Further links between the Congress factions and like minded opposition group gave a sense of efficacy as well as political potency to opposition groups."
The Indian National Congress, after achieving independence transformed itself into a dominant political party. The multiplicity of government was obscured by the fact that the Congress effectively controlled by its Central leaders was in power both at the Centre and the States. This gave the appearance of unitary structure of Indian federation. After the transfer of power Congress quickly became India's central political institution more important than parliament, bureaucracy or any other formal institution of the State. Legislatures at the national and provincial levels were rubbers stamp for the bills which resulted from bargaining and debate within the Congress party.

Congress could maintain its dominance in the political system since independence to mid sixties by preserving a certain minimal harmony among many potentially contradictory interests. This was no easy task, but the party possess the skills, the spoils and clout to resolve or mitigate most conflicts that arose within it. During this period interest group in rural areas had in most cases not yet fully crystallised and those that had, were usually not well organised, so the conflict were neither too humorous nor too sharp to overcome. Congress could succeed as India's central integrating institutions and as an agency for conflict management because it was fundamentally a political machine.
This Congress machine performed at least one crucial role in the political system, that, it integrated the different levels of the system, linking Delhi with the states and local levels. In its dealing with the states, what the centre (Congress) couldn't impose on the states through the apparatus of the constitution, it could enforce through the party channels. During this period Congress had become a highly centralised organisation and the provincial Congress Committee had become accustomed to looking for guidance and directions from the All India Congress Committee (AICC). The AICC used to take its guidance from the working Committee and generally the working committee from the leader or leaders. Hence, India, though federal in theory became monolithic in practice.

The 1967 general election brought a major change in the political map of India by throwing off the monopolistic control of twenty years of uninterrupted Congress rule in India. The fourth general election gave an electoral stamp to the process of organisational breakdown of the dominant Congress party that had been under way for quite some-time. There were many aspects of this organisational breakdown of the Congress party. There had already taken place a considerable "loss of touch" with the people. The most
important aspect of the Congress party's organisational failure was in the break-up of the party itself in several states. This was a new phase in the development of a factionalism and dissidence within the party or of organisational vs. ministerial wings. What took place was a breakaway of a large number of Congressmen from the present party and their active association under new parties with the phenomenon of various "Jan Congress", the "Bangla Congress", the "Jan Kranti Dal" of Bihar. There took place the slow disintegration of Congress party's all encompassing character and growing polarization in its ranks everywhere. The success of the opposition to the Congress in the election owes more to this factor than to the alignment within the non-Congress parties. The 1967 election thus appeared to be a period of transition caused by the erosion of the Congress system and its ability to contain divergent forces within its rank into some sort of consensus.

The 1967 general election marked the beginning of the transformation of the Indian political system from a dominant one party system to multi-partyism. The Congress majority in the Lok-Sabha was greatly reduced and in 8 out of the 16 states which went to polls the Congress failed to secure an absolute majority. Many contradictory and significant trends, having wider implications for the
federalizing process in India were unfolded by the election results, But due to defection and counter-defection, ministries came and went in less than two years in many states. These coalition ministries were however formed by the coming together of heterogeneous political parties with diametrically opposite ideologies and programmes united with the sole aim of capturing power. This resulted in a lack of consensus among the coalition partners. After the split in the Congress party in 1969, the position further worsened and the Indian political system reached a low water-mark.

So, in the newly emergent situation of post 1967, a deep erosion of political consensus took place, due to the fact that none of the political-parties in power agreed about the pattern of Centre-state relations. All political-parties (except Congress) in this period voiced dissatisfaction over the emerging state of Centre-state relations and tried to articulate their own views on this issue.

However, the catalytic events of 1969, the emergence of towering leadership of Indira Gandhi and her landslide victories (1971-72) led to the restoration of the one party dominance system after an interlude of four years (1969-71).8
The second phase of the one party dominance had much in common with first phase, particularly the emergence of Indira Gandhi's leadership without any faction within Congress. Moreover, the party, had attracted variegated and wide ranging groups and interests into its fold, thereby maintaining again its open umbrella and consensus character. The Congress also regained its massive legislative majorities, which were necessary for both dominance and discipline. Thus many features of the first phase found continuity in the second phase.

But despite such a large measure of continuity, there were some noticeable differences in the second phase of one party dominance. In the words of Iqbal Narain and Ram Joshi and Desai, a major difference in the new model was the collapse of the competitive mechanism within the dominant party. The Congress split and the emergence of Indira Gandhi's leadership rudely destroyed the balance of internal factional competition. There was a growing intolerance towards faction and factional disputes. Factions were considered a challenge to the supreme leader rather than a part of Congress system. Such a combination of monopolistic dominance of the Congress and the growing attenuation of internal competition led to a steady erosion of the openness of the system and there emerged an authoritarian
concentration of power resulting ultimately in the imposition of the Emergency.

The second major difference of the new model was the decline of institutionalised politics and the growth of populism. Institutions were devalued and short circuiting. "The party was considered to be no more than a switch-on and switch-off affair and the task of party building was given a very low priority". The collapse of internal competition mechanism, the sharpening of ideological battle, growing intolerance and increasing confrontation in a rapidly polarizing polity culminated in the imposition of the Emergency.

The Indian federalism during this period of second one party dominance, became exceedingly centralized. During this period Indira Gandhi emerged as the chief spokesman of the superior claims of unitarism over federalism in the political development of Indian polity. The electoral change of 1977 affected both the pattern of voters choice as well as the institutional frame-work of party politics. It brought about an end of Congress rule and in its place was ushered in a rather nebulous two party system. The 1977 election revealed certain basic shifts in electoral behavior which contributed to a fundamental change in the structure
of party system. It paved the way for re-establishment of a pluralistic pattern of society in the country under the rule of the Janata government at the Centre as well in many states. Centre-state relations acquired a new dimension in Indian polity, particularly in the wake of the formation of non-Janata ministries at the State-level largely backed by the regional political parties. This gave rise to speculation that the multi-party competitive politics in place of single party dominant politics, would be perhaps more suitable to the federal framework. The Janata and the non-Janata ministries came to office in numerous states after the assembly election of 1977. All this set in motion a genuine federalizing process. State government’s were able to enjoy a wider measure of operational autonomy and there was less interference in their affairs by New Delhi. But inspite of this no major institutional change took place in the Janata period since Prime Minister Morarji Desai flatly ruled out any change in the constitutional provision with regard to the Centre-state relations proposed by the left front led West Bengal government in 1978. Thus, Janata period didn’t bring any structural change in Centre-state relation, though there was a talk of certain amount of autonomy and balance for the states in relation to Centre.
The 1980 parliamentary election brought unexpected results and focused on the changing character of Indian electorate and the political parties in India. The election once again brought the Congress party in power led by Indira Gandhi. Though it appeared after the election results that one party dominance was back, but expectation was belied as it became clear that Congress(I) was no more the same dominant party as it was since independence to fourth general election and from 1971 to 1975. The 1980 election gave a thumping victory to the Congress party and more particularly to Indira Gandhi. Once again she became all powerful in the party and the government. But due to her old style of operation and authoritarian personality different regional forces emerged on the Indian political scene. The coming to power of Telgu-Desam in Andhra Pradesh bolstered regional forces and parties to challenge the Congress party in subsequent year in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Tripura, Sikkim. These developments ended the myth of one party dominance in the political development of India. The Centre-state relations had a considerable bearing with this changed political situation. There started more demand for state autonomy by opposition ruled states and the articulation of demands became more vocal, sharpened and crystallized. This was realized by the Congress government.
at Centre and it was manifested in the announcement for the appointment of Sarkaria Commission to review the Centre-State relations. Hence the beginning of the 1980s witnessed the decline of the hold of Congress system and the consensus and encompassing character of it. There emerged a situation of multi-partyism with the Congress party in majority at the Centre. The 1984 election, however, gave an unprecedented victory to Congress(I) led by Rajiv Gandhi, but it couldn't alter the whole process, which was a polarized federal society and government in India.

Hence in the light of above changes in Centre-state relation, the present study assumes greater significance since it underscores the importance of political parties in giving the shape and direction to the Centre-state relation. The change in the party system after fourth general election contributed to the demand for change in the existing Centre-state relation. The demand of non-Congress political parties (national and regional) for the restructuring of Centre-state relation was mainly the outcome of the change in the Indian party system from one party dominant system to multi-party system. The changed political climate of post 1967 election period had a considerable bearing on the functioning of Centre-state relations. The dynamics of party
politics in the late seventies and the eighties further brought the Centre-state relations to the centre stage of Indian political scene. It is this context which defines the parameters of the present study. The dimension of party politics and its influence on the functioning of Centre-state relations has not been given adequate attention in the research of Indian federalism.

Several studies have been done on the subject of Centre-state relations and has been primarily dealt with at three levels: (1) The constitutional aspect (2) The institutional arrangement and (3) The impact of political process on Indian federalism. However, with regard to first two level, the constitutional and the institutional aspect of Centre-state relation, considerable number of studies have been done, whereas with regards to the impact of political process (Political parties and informal forces etc.) on Centre-state relation the studies are almost negligible. Hence, the present study is an attempt in that direction to give some meaningful observations on the informal process of federalism. A review of the major works on the constitutional and institutional aspect of the Indian Federation brings out the range of opinion from one extreme to another. Agreeing with large number of authors M.C.Setalvad\textsuperscript{12}, reveals that notwithstanding the predominance
of the Centre, the Indian polity is federal since it grants significant powers to the states in the legislative, financial and administrative matter. Writers of the opposite view point, such as K.C. Wheare expressed in his "Federal Government" that the Indian constitution is quasi federal though possessing a formal federal structure. It is pointed out that the Indian constitution vests the union government with some of the most crucial powers which makes the state hardly autonomous in their sphere of actions. In short system may be federal but it is unitary in substance.

In her major work Kumud Divathia\textsuperscript{13} emphasizes that although the framework of the constitution is federal, the substance is unitary. This is because the union have overriding powers under article 356, 360, 249, the provisions regarding financial distribution etc. she compares the Indian constitution with the U.S.A. and Australia and finds that in India, the Centre has more powers in the field such as Banking, Income-Tax, Corporation Tax, Posts and Education unlike the U.S.A where many of the Centre's powers are implied, in India they are all specified.

Bharti Ray's\textsuperscript{14} "Evolution of Indian federalism" is somewhat more restrained in its characterisation of the Indian
federal structure. The Indian republic is described as a "modified version of federalism". The existence of a two sets of government, a clear demarcation of powers by a written constitution and an independent judiciary proves that the primary federal structure are there, though both at normal times and during emergencies the Centre interferes to a considerable extent in the jurisdiction of the States.

Granville Austin in his work characterises the Indian constitution as "co-operative federalism" which in general produces strong Centre but doesn't necessarily weaken the States. The constitution is flexible as seen in the broad concurrent list. But Austin admits that the pre-dominance of Fiscal and political powers in the hands of the Centre is increasing centralisation.

In somewhat the same vein K.Subba Rao in his book "Indian federal System" maintains that while some unitary principles are definitely present, they don't basically affect the Federal Principle of the Indian Constitution. They only tilt the balance of powers in favour of the union. If there is any tension in the system, it is due to the non-implementation of the federal principle.

"K.Santhanam" calls India a "Centre Paramount Federation". Representing the views of the authors such as "Setelvad", he points out the need for a federation in India
due to the diversities in the Indian Society and notes that the constitution does create a federal structure. After surveying the distribution of powers between the States and the Centre, he agrees that the Centre is paramount in the Indian federalism, but this doesn't take away the essence of a federal polity.

A.G. Noorani\textsuperscript{18} takes up from Wheare and reaffirms the "quasifederal" character of the Indian constitution. The Centre can invade the sphere allotted to the states and they are not totally autonomous. He however, emphasises that the States are not totally powerless and the importance of cooperative federalism has been realised since 1967.

"Amal Ray\textsuperscript{19} in "Inter Governmental Relations in India" says that "if under a system of government both Centre and State authorities derive their status and power from the constitution, then there is no valid ground to deny federal character to that system of government. By this criteria India is a Federation. The absence of autonomous existence, on the part of the states before independence, the political need for reconciling diverse states and economic desire to built welfare state influenced the shaping of the Indian constitution, requiring that the union government of India bestowed with more powers that have been given to
other federal governments. Yet in providing for a strong Centre, the Indian constitution has only followed a growing trend towards centralisation.

However, the major work on the "changing Political process on Indian Federalism" is that of Amal Ray: "Tension Areas in India's federal System". The author says that the breakdown of one party dominance in 1967 resulted in a profound alteration of the political setting of Indian federalism. The Centre-state tension and grievances would no more be contained. In the newly emerged system of post 1967 India, a deep erosion of political consensus took place due to the fact that none of the new parties in power agreed about the pattern of Centre-state relation. The powerful regional parties such as D.M.K. were committed to increase state autonomy and multi-party anti-Congress coalition in some states further increased uncertainty in state politics. The new mood of rebellion was directed against the Centre, which had imprinted its stamp on the federal process. The author feels that the only possible way to regain consensus and orderly operations of the Centre-state relations is through genuine accommodation and compromise and swift implementation of egalitarian economic programme. Violent change is the only other alternative and that is bound to weaken the federalism, according to the author.
Subrata Sarkar's "The Centre and the States" is a forceful work criticising not only the political process as it has developed in the past two decades, but constitutional provisions themselves are greatly in favour of the Central authority. He meticulously surveys all the major areas of the Centre-state conflict and concludes that increasing Central dominance over the states has led to a situation of growing conflict in the Indian polity in which the members of the ruling party themselves play antagonistic roles. Sarkar shows by his data that the States have been virtually reduced to a client status by the Centre.

A notable work in this field is Micheal Brecher's "Succession in India" which though primarily concerned with the study of the two Prime Minister successions, throws light on certain important issue of Centre-state relation. According to Brecher, the crucial role played by the Chief Ministers had considerable bearing on the Centre-state relations. Under Nehru the Chief Ministers would accept the leaders advice and decision but would distort the intent in the process of implementation or delay the process. The Nehru's departure from the scene made the role of Chief Minister's very significant. The Centre-state discussions became more genuine, with the result, that although the
decision process was slower, the implementation was more effective. Morris Jones in his work "Government and Politics in India" described the functioning of federalism in India as a system of bargaining, where the states bargain with the Centre for the maximum possible favour and resources. Strong Chief Minister such as Kamraj, Kairon and B.C. Roy got more out of the Centre for their States than others. Under the Prime Minister Shastri "Market style bargaining" became more intense and obvious. The weaker the Prime Minister, the more intense the bargaining becomes.

However, with regard to the "Political parties and Centre-state relation" the work of B.L. Maheswari and Amal Ray is significant.

B.L. Maheswari in his work "Centre-state relation in Seventies" classifies Indian Political parties into three groups on the stability-change dimension. First and politically the most significant group consists of Congress (ruling) which does not advocate any change in the structure and pattern of Centre-state relation. The second group consists of those parties which accept the constitutional structure and the need for a strong Centre but would like to see changes in the machinery and style of Centre-state relation, like B.J.P., Congress(O). The third group demands restructuring the entire frame work of Centre-state
relation. In this group one can find the C.P.I.(M), C.P.I., Akali Dal and other regional parties.

Amal Ray's handling of the issue is restricted to the role of the Congress party and its influence in shaping the nature of Centre-state relation.

There are two diametrically opposite views of the constitution pronounced by Setalward and K.C. Wheare respectively. The former emphasized the existence in India of a minimum criteria for characterisation of its polity as a federal system. The latter preferred to stress the unitary substance marked by federal outershell. But despite this difference, there is one point of agreement among the authors namely that India is a centralized state. However, some of them think that, this centralization has exceeded the bounds of federalism. While some other thinks that it has only modified it.

The proposed study would be an attempt

(1) To identify and analyse the factors which contributed to a relatively smooth functioning of the federal system in the initial years after the independence.

(2) To analyse the factors which contributed to the emergence of Centre-State relations as a vital public and political issue in the late sixties and seventies onwards.
(3) To analyse the shifts and changes in the attitudes of political parties towards the issue of Centre-state relation, distribution of power and to identify the factors which can account for such shifts and changes.

(4) To assess the impact of the political process (informal politics) upon the Centre-state relation and also to observe the effect of debate and discussion on operational aspect of federal polity of India.

The proposed study is divided into six chapters besides Introduction and Conclusion.

The first chapter has made an attempt to deal with the historical evolution of Indian federalism. It has discussed the background, the perception of the constitution makers with regards to federal structure of India in pre independent India. It also covered the functioning of federal polity in the initial years of independent India, besides explaining the factors for smooth Centre-state relations during this period.

The second chapter has dealt with those factors which are responsible for tension in the functioning of Centre state relation after the fourth general election in 1967. The chapter has attempted to see the changes in the Indian party system and those factors contributing to the emergence
of conflicting views on the question of Centre-state relation. Many other factors causing strains in Centre-state relation has been taken into account in this chapter.

The third chapter has focussed on the role of Congress party in moulding the Centre-state relation in pre and post independent India. Congress being a dominant party was able to influence the pattern of Centre-state relation and therefore an effort is made to see the co-relationship between the evolution and working of federal polity in India and the Congress party.

The fourth chapter has been dealt with the Indian communist party (C.P.I.(M) and C.P.I.) approach and position on the Centre-state relation question. The Communist parties has been the only organised national opposition parties, which have raised the question of the existing Centre-state relation and demanded a complete restructuring of it. An attempt has been made to focus the party's stand on the said issue over the years.

The fifth chapter has been dealt with the Bhartiya Janata Party (B.J.P.), the only rightist national opposition party's perception and stand on the question of Centre-state relation. B.J.P. position on the Centre-state relation is a departure from other opposition parties. An attempt has been made to look into various factors for
influencing the B.J.P. (Aswhile Jansangh) position on Centre-state relation over the period of time.

The sixth chapter has tried to discuss the two regional parties Akali Dal from north and D.M.K. from south, who have taken a very critical or rather confrontationist position on Centre-state relation question. Both the parties have demanded profound changes in existing distribution of power between Centre and States. Hence an attempt of this chapter is to see the factors responsible for these shifts and dynamics of regional aspirations for the restructuring of federal relations in Indian constitution.

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources. This study has used the primary resources on the subject like parliamentary debates, report of various committee on Centre-state relations set-up by government, Government documents and party manifestoes. The thesis has also relied on vast available studies on the working of Centre-state relations. The present study has also taken the help of the interviews of the leaders and political functionaries of major political parties at national and regional level to uptodate the work undertaken.


