Introduction

Understanding State, Region and Statehood Movement

The statehood movement after India’s independence got momentum after the framing of a democratic constitution. Many statehood movements took vociferous shape demanding separate state within the Indian union. Unlike Telangana and Jharkhand, the Koshal movement remained a perennial issue within the state of Odisha. The causes of the statehood movement vary from state to state. In the case of Koshal movement, economic backwardness, historical neglect, regional disparity, cultural dimensions and political discriminations are said to be the fundamental causes. It is also true to invite the attention of the larger public because such movement tends to get little coverage in the media. It is true in the case of Koshal movement that it has remained unnoticed despite the existence of the movement throughout the odd years in various forms. Though it is said to be a genuine movement for statehood, it has not been able to capture the political imagination of the people of Odisha to the extent as it could have.

Why it is that statehood movement is is often misread in other parts of the state though the movements are not directed against the former? It is interesting to investigate Koshal movement for various reasons because it could shed light on how movements are not autonomous from both formal and informal institutions. Movements are highly embedded within various issues and get influenced by such institutions and processes directly and indirectly. This study can uncover how movements like this can operate in such contexts. Understanding movements is necessary for reading the future of politics of the state. An analytical study of Koshal movement could uncover the various dimensions of subnational politics. One amongst them could be the persistence of regional imbalances in the state. It would be interesting to inquire as to why regional imbalances in Odisha are still persisting despite practice of democratic politics. This study reveals how democratically governed state can produce backward region over a period of time. Many states have historical backward regions. What is strange is that the democratically ruled

---

states have not been able to reduce disparities within the state, though such states do not practice discrimination as a matter of rule against certain region\textsuperscript{2}. Democratically governed states also face acute regional disparities in terms of development. What this work attempts to prove is to uncover the causes of failures to bridge the disparities and addresses the broad issue of politics, economy and culture. It is true that economic disparities may not always be the fundamental reasons of statehood movement\textsuperscript{3}. Many factors may sometimes play significant causal role together in such movement. This study is not to prove that a movement for separate state exists in Odisha. It is to explain the larger question how issues of regional disparities are responded to by the state and non-state actors in a rather democratic framework while attempting to explain this would not be suffice if we do not address the various dimensions, through which regional disparities issues express them for example, the demand for a separate state. It would be wrong to simply analyze whether or not small states are good for raising the larger question of regional disparities in other economic problem or genuine issues could be addressed within the existing state.

This study is as much the study of a movement as it is a study of how a democratically governed state might experience regional disparities existing in various forms. Because issues like this can express its grievances through various means and one amongst them could be a separate state. One can find out many fundamental features of such movement. But one has to be careful while studying the issues of statehood movement. A large number of statehood movements in India were initially raising the question of economic inequality of regions and alleging discriminations by the developed region within the state. The Jharkhand movement, Chhattisgarh movement, Gorkhaland movement, Telangana movement were initially raising the economic subordination of these regions by the developed regions of the state. Gradually when these movements were heading towards their peak the activists of these movements came closely to be associated with many other issues in support of their demands. Significant among them were political

\textsuperscript{2} Doug McAdam, Sidney G. Tarrow and Charles Tilly, (2001), Dynamics of Contentions Cambridge University Press

\textsuperscript{3} Dean E. McHenry, Jr., (2007), \textit{Is Economic Inequality a Foundation of Separatist Identity? An Examination of Successful and Unsuccessful Movements in India}, Claremont Graduate University, pp.2-28
discrimination in terms of inadequate representation of leaders from the backward regions in the state council of ministers, attempt of cultural homogenization and in some cases subordination of peripheral culture, language, dialect to mainstream ones. Colonization and exploitation of natural resources of backward region is a common phenomenon. The surprising fact is that most of the backward regions in India are ironically rich in mineral resources along with other huge natural resources. When such movements grow and reach their maturity they come to interlink themselves with multiple variables. In some cases regional movements are identity movements seeking special protection and concessions from the state. It could be a movement for the regional self-governance. There are usually two potential and significant causes of the emergence of regional movement-one is the inter-regional or inter-community conflict, and the other is the conflict between the region and the state. In the initial phases of history of the state formation in India languages played a disproportionate rule.

It may be relevant here to note that the demand of all emerge out of the environment which is an aggregate of a large number of variables like history, geography, soil structure, culture, economy and aspirations of the development of the people. Obviously, demands of people of one region may differ from the demands of the people of other region and therefore should be dealt separately in the regional environmental context, more particularly in a federal polity. In this theoretical backdrop it is worthwhile to examine the issue of separate statehood. India is a plural polity having different religious and cultural ethos and identities which have well been exploited by the intruders of hues in their own favour, more specifically by the British colonial masters. Acute economic poverty, an exploitative bureaucracy, dismal development, wide ranging unemployment, illiteracy, malnutrition etc had been the curse of the colonial rule against which the nationalist forces fought tooth and nail and could free the country from the British tutelage. During the freedom struggle the leadership assured the masses of all-round development in post-independence period and as such the father of the Indian Constitution adopted parliamentary system and federal structure so that people may actively participate in shaping their destiny and putting their might in keeping the nation united and integrated without losing their identity. Keeping this in mind the states were
created on linguistic basis. Since our federation is centrifugal and the centre had concentrated larger powers in its own hands, it tried to satisfy the developmental needs of the states and sub-regions through institutions like Planning Commissions and National Development Council and number of programmes initiated by it. However, it has been noticed that these plans and programmes often fall short to the aspirations of the people of a particular sub-region, since they may not have been implemented so vigorously by the administration. It is due to these reasons that the people of different regions are not satisfied with the form and pace of development. Some regions or sub-regions of the country in recent times have experienced a better economic upswing in comparison with the others. In this backdrop, with the rising level of political consciousness, the people of backward regions started to aspire for more infra-structural growth, better resource mobilization and its use for development in an effort to create an egalitarian social order. However, when their appeals, protests, demands or other related efforts yielded no fruit or marginal success a demand for a separate state emerged. The logic behind such demands has been that the aspirations of the people can only be fulfilled if the administrative power is given to them, by creating a new state.

The demands of Chhattisgarh state (M.P), Jharkhand (Bihar), Telangana (A.P), Vidarbha (Maharashtra) and the division of Uttar Pradesh in four different states namely Uttarakhand, Bundelkhand, Eastern and Western states are testimony of such aspirations. More recently the demand of Koshal State in Odisha has been raised. The logic behind these demands are that in larger states different sub-regions do not get proper attention and therefore some of the sub-regions trail behind in the race of development, whereas other regions get undue attention. The regions of this are administrative mismanagement due to the largeness of the state. Whenever the smaller states have been created they took swift leap in the direction of development. Creation of state of Haryana from Punjab and Gujarat from Maharashtra are two examples in this context. This indicates that the constitution permits the creation of new states. Another reason for the creation of separate states is that by creating such states the cultural and ethnic identity gets preserved. A psychological feeling of subordination and suppression also help in the creation of a separate state demand. Hence, broadly the demand of separate state seems to be for
economic development, preservation of socio-cultural identity and for a responsive and
development administration. It is to satisfy the psychological and emotional feelings of
the people of the region in the wider perspective of achieving the goal of national
integration that demands for smaller states have been satisfied in post-independence
period. The demand for a separate Koshal state may be viewed in the above logical
perspective. Apart from this the other reasons which are generally put forward for the
creation of a separate state relate to administrative viability, cultural or ethnical identity,
alienation of land and forest, uprooting of the population and feeling of suppression or
subordination among the people of the region⁴. The demand for a separate Koshal state is
also being on these basis.

The next section of this work comprehensively analyses the question raised above.
A study on regionalism in politics is likely to be inadequate without making a reference
to the process through which it articulates itself. A distinctive group gets mobilized in the
politics of the state influence the process of political development. It is also interesting to
understand how various groups safeguard their interests by using various means available
to them to serve the purpose of their interest articulation.

**Odisha and Koshal statehood movement**

A movement for new state within Indian union is not a new issue. It has multiple
dimensions⁵. Similarly in Orissa a demand for Koshal State has become a burning
political issue⁶. The Koshal movement in Western Orissa became intense following the
creation of three new Indian states namely Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal and Jharkhand in
2000. The demand for Koshal state has been there for quite a time now and the current
resurgence is result of that issue. The news headlines frequently captured the growing

---

⁶ Gorekhnath Sahu (2005) *Koshal Pradesh* (In Oriya), Priyambada Prakashani, Subarnapur; P.K.
Delhi; Giridhari Prasad Guru (eds) (2009) *West Orissa: Past and Present*, Western Orissa Development
Commemorative Volume, Sambalpur University; Jayprakash Pradhan and et al (2004) *Interpreting the
Demand for Koshal State in Orissa: Development vs Underdevelopment*, Working Paper No. 1, Koshal
Development Forum, New Delhi.
popular support for Koshal movement in Orissa. ‘A new state out of Odisha in 5 years?’; ‘Sambalpur Municipality adopts resolution for Koshala state’; ‘Ferment in Orissa’; ‘Demand for Koshala state gains momentum in Orissa’; ‘Stir for ‘Koshala State’ to be intensified’; ‘MLA seeks statehood for western Orissa’; ‘Demand for separate Koshala state gets boost in western Orissa’; ‘Pro-Koshala campaigners gear up to intensify stir’; and ‘Cry for Koshala’ are few headlines to mention. This popular sentiment in western part of Orissa for a separate state is in complete contrast to the people's leading role in the establishment of Orissa as a separate state way back in 1936.

It appears that the collective memory of Oriya movement in the 19th and 20th century seems to have faded with time, while the individual identity of Koshal Rajya has gained a wider appeal.

Western Orissa, which is considered as comprising present districts of Sambalpur, Bargarh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Nawapara, Sonepur, Boudh, Sundargarh and Athmallick subdivision of Angul (the Jurisdiction of Sambalpur University) has been an integral part of the glorious land of South Koshal of ancient and medieval times. Modern Paschim Odisha or Koshal (Western Orissa) has been known variously as Attabika Rajya, Koshala, Dakshin Koshala, Trikalinga, Mahakantara, Patna Rajya, Hirakhand Rajya and Sambalpur Garhjat in the pre-colonial period. The inscriptional records from 5th Century to 16th Century C.E, refer to this area as Koshal (Dakshin Koshal). Under the British rule the Koshal region was loosely called as

---

Sambalpur region. It came under the Chhota Nagpur Division of the central provinces. The region witnessed a popular movement for the cause of replacement of Oriya by Hindi as the official language in 1885. This has led to long drawn popular movements in the region for the cause of Oriya language and culture. Under the leadership of Nilamoni Vidyaratna, Dharanidhar Mishra, Madan Mohan Mishra, Braja Mohan Patnaik, Balabhadr Supakar, Bihari Das and other who spearheaded the movement for restoration of the Oriya as the official language and the transfer of the Sambalpur region including Patna, Kalahandi, Sonepur, Bamra and Rairakhol to the Orissa Division of the Bengal province. The Vernacular press, *Sambalpur Hitaisini*, published from Bamra has played an important role in sustaining and encouraging the movement.

As a result of prolonged struggle carried out by the Sambalpur people with the support of people from Coastal Orissa Sambalpur region was amalgamated with the Orissa division on 16th October 1905. This gave the basis for the formation of a separate state province later in 1936. The people of western region had not only played a pivotal role in constructing the modern identity of Orissa but also had made significant contribution towards the development and progress of the state. Here it is against this backdrop that the present work focuses on the emergence of sub-regional Koshal movement for a separate Koshal state in the context of Orissa. The state of Orissa lies in the eastern zone of India. The state has Jharkhand earlier (Bihar) on its north, Chhattisgarh earlier (Madhya Pradesh) on the west and Andhra Pradesh on its South. West Bengal lies to its north-east and Bay of Bengal on the East. The state of Orissa covers an area of 155,707 square kilometers (60,171 sq. miles) and for administrative purposes has been divided into 30 districts. The 2001 census of India puts the population of Orissa at 36,804,660

---

18 It may be noted that the Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh regions of the erstwhile states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh have been constituted into separate states of the Indian union as per the Bihar and Madhya Pradesh Reorganization Act of 2000.
19 Originally there were 13 districts in Orissa. But with effect from 1st April 1993 the number of district in Orissa has increased to 30. The new districts created in 1993 were carved out of the sub-division of the earlier 13 districts. Some new districts have been created out of a single sub-division of a former district, while the other new districts have been formed by joining two or more sub-divisions of a former district. The original 13 undivided districts are Balasore, Bolangir, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, Kalahandi, Keonjhar, Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Phulbani, Puri, Sambalpur and Sundargarh. The newly created districts
comprising 18,660,570 males and 18,144,090 females. This figure accounts for 3.57% of the total population of India. In terms of area Orissa accounts for 4.74% of India's total area.\(^{20}\) The state of Orissa, as it exists today, has grown out of the earlier reconstitution of Oriya territories at different periods of time. As a separate province in colonial India it came into being in 1936. Then, it comprised Six British administered districts. After independence of India, twenty-four Oriya princely states, popularly known as princely Orissa, were merged with the province of Orissa and thereby the state acquired its present size. The formation of Orissa province in 1936 and its subsequent expansion after independence happened due to two prominent factors; (a) the rise of Oriya national movement in British Orissa; and (b) the emergence of popular democratic nationalist struggles in princely Orissa.

Both the events left lasting impact on the socio-cultural and political realities prevailing in post colonial and contemporary Orissa. These events also considerably influenced the development of sub-regional movement in the state of Orissa in contemporary period. For a greater part of their history, the Oriya people enjoyed a considerable degree of political autonomy and cultural unity under different dynasties. Around the eleventh century the Oriya people emerged as a powerful cultural community with a well defined language and a definite territory of their own. But the process of disintegration started with the fall of the last Oriya Hindu king. The Oriya territories thereafter passed into the hands of the Mughals, the Marathas and the British successively. It was under the British that the Oriya 'homeland' saw its first systematic territorial disintegration and the Oriya people their cultural fragmentation. The vivisection of Oriya people and their territory can be attributed for the very nature of British Conquest. The British occupied different parts of Oriya territories at different periods and placed them under different provincial administration. The Southern part of Orissa was kept in Madras presidency the coastal

---

tract and adjoining areas in Bengal presidency and the western part under central provinces. Besides, a vast part of Oriya homeland was left under the control of the native Oriya princes.

This political dismemberment of Oriya territories under the British in the long run posed serious external threats to Oriya identity as the Oriya people were dominated culturally and materially by outsiders in every provincial unit they were placed under. Most of the officials who were posted to the portion of Oriya territory kept in Bengal were Bengali migrants. Bengali served as the language of the courts and the medium of instruction in law & teaching and clerical services were occupied by the Bengalis. If an Oriya wanted employment with some prestige in administration, he had to virtually turn himself into a Bengali. Similar situation prevailed in the Oriya territories tagged to Madras presidency and central provinces.

In the Oriya areas of Madras and Central Provinces, the Oriya people were dominated by the Telugu and the Hindi speaking people respectively. Under such circumstances, the development of Oriya nationalism in British India was but natural. The symptoms of Oriya unity began to appear soon after the outbreak of the devastating Orissa famine of 1866. This feeling of Oriya unity soon crystallized into a strong national movement demanding unification of Oriya areas under a separate provincial administration. Initially, the national consciousness among the Oriya was in the form of reaction to their inferior socio-economic and political positions in every province where they lived as insignificant cultural minorities.

But when the Oriya people faced total extinction of their language, culture and their identity they clamoured for formation of a separate Orissa province in British India. The cry for a separate Orissa province in British India first came from the Oriya division of Bengal presidency. But soon it spread to the other Oriya areas placed under the Madras and Central provinces. The first step towards formation of separate Orissa province was taken when the Oriya region of Sambalpur was transferred from central provinces to the Orissa division of Bengal presidency in 1905. This was followed by the constitution of
Bihar-Orissa province in 1912. Finally, the Oriya national aspiration was realized when six British administered Oriya districts placed under different provincial units were interacted on linguistic basis to form separate Orissa province to protect and preserve Oriya identity. But the goal of united Orissa still remained incomplete as vast parts of Oriya homeland ruled by the native princes were not included in the new Orissa province.

Hence in its second phase Oriya nationalism spread to princely Oriya territories. In this part of Orissa nationalistic upsurge took the shape of an anti-feudal democratic popular movement to free the Oriya people from the tyranny of the native rulers and integrate these territories with province of Orissa. These Oriya territories were integrated with Orissa province during 1948-49. After integration of nearly all Oriya territories with Orissa province, the goal of Oriya nationalism was almost achieved and with that the question of Oriya as a district nationality was legitimately established in India. Henceforth, nationalism in Orissa assumed the form of an Oriya sentiment which strongly emphasized the distinctiveness of Oriya identity and called for loyalty to Orissa state. It is, however, important to note that the state of Orissa that finally emerged due to the integration of British Orissa and princely Orissa comprises two distinct regional units, namely, the Coastal area and the Western region. The coastal area originally comprised four coastal districts of Balasore, Cuttack, Ganjam and Puri. But after the reorganization of districts in Orissa in 1993, the number of district in the coastal region has gone up to eleven. The district of Balasore was divided to form the new districts of Balasore and Bhadrak. Similarly, the district of Cuttack was divided to form the districts of Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur and Kendrapara, while Ganjam was bifurcated to form the districts of Ganjam and Gajapati. The district of Puri was divided into the new districts of Puri, Khurda and Nayagarh. The western region also originally included five districts of Bolangir, Kalahandi, Phulbani, Sambalpur and Sundargarh. Following the reorganization of districts, the number of district in the western region has also increased to eleven. Except the district of Sundargarh, the rest of districts in the western region were divided to form the new districts.
The district of Sambalpur was divided to form four new districts of Sambalpur, Bargarh, Deogarh and Jharsuguda. Similarly, Bolangir district was divided to form new districts of Bolangir and Sonepur, Kalahandi district was divided into two districts of Kalahandi and Nuapada and finally Phulbani district was divided to form the new districts of Boudh and Kandhamal. These two conspicuous regions of Orissa – Coastal and western – form two compact units in terms of geographic, demographic, linguistic and socio-cultural characteristics and they experienced differential rate of socio-economic development and political mobility at different periods of time. Compared to western region, the coastal belt of Orissa remained economically more advanced, politically dominant and culturally pre-eminent. In the perception of western Oriya people the unification of Oriya territories led to the domination of coastal belt over western region of Orissa. They further claim that Orissa state is solely identified with coastal Oriyas who because of their economic, political and cultural pre-eminence perceive themselves the mainstream and the vanguard of Oriya nationality.

It may be noted that due to early British penetration coastal Orissa experienced improvement in transport, communication, irrigation facilities, spread of education and media activities, on the contrary Western Orissa, which remained mostly under native rule of the Oriya princes, received low level of socio-economic development and opportunities. This regional disparity widened further after independence as the coastal region continued to receive better official attention from all successive governments in Orissa state. Further, as compared to the coastal area the western region has a substantial tribal and scheduled caste population. This has serious economic, political and social implications as far as regional disparities between the two regions are concerned.

Besides the socio-economic disparities, the two regions reveal considerable political inequalities since colonial times. Except for the Sambalpur district, the rest of the areas in the western region experienced the traditional domination of the princes. While the entire coastal region experienced the legal-rational bureaucratic domination of the British rule. The historicity of the context thus gave the coastal people a position of political advantage. Since independence, the coastal region continues to dominate the assembly
and the ministry and also affects decision – making, policy-making and opinion-making. This regional socio-economic and political imbalance led to the rise of regional discontent and separatism in western Orissa despite the overarching linguistic homogeneity in the state of Orissa. This regional consciousness is further reinforced by some cultural and historical factors. For example each of the two regions is associated with a local speech/dialectal form, i.e. Sambalpuri speech with western region and 'Kataki', or coastal speech with coastal region.

This natural clubbing of local speech with a particular region tends to sharpen the regional differences more and creates attitudinal sub-culture and insider-outsider dichotomy in each region. In terms of history, there exist some regional differences too. Historically, the coastal and the western regions belong to the territories of the erstwhile kingdoms of Utkal-kalinga and Koshal respectively. These differing regional historical traditions not only help in regional identity formation but also provide favourable grounds for articulating regional consciousness in western Orissa.

In recent years regionalism in western Orissa has taken a nationalist turn as a section of people in western Orissa began thinking in terms of a separate state within the Indian union on the ground of their newly constructed Koshali nationality based on Koshali language and culture. This development can not only give rise to a parallel nationalism in Orissa but also it impairs the unity and integrity of Oriya's as a distinct nationality and Orissa as well-integrated province within Indian union.

Thus, while in colonial era the threat to Oriya identity came from external sources, the threat in contemporary times comes largely from regional forces from within. At one point of time, the internal regional threats originated from regional disparities and political – attitudinal conflict between the people of coastal and western region; but recently the threat is coming from the development of Koshali nationalism within the Oriya society.
Aims and Objectives of the Study

The present study is conducted with the primary objective of bringing into focus the regional imbalance in the case of Orissa. Emphasis has been mainly been focused on the emerging forces of regional conflict and the level of socio-economic and political disparities existing between the coastal and the western regions of Orissa in contemporary period. Emphasis has also been placed on the possible impact of regional conflict on the Oriya national identity.

The aim of the study is to understand and analyse the implications of regional imbalance in India and Orissa in particular. India is facing problems of regionalism, which have huge implications for national politics. It is necessary to understand how backward region in India express them in a democratic framework. Understanding causes of backwardness of regions will help to make democratic means to minimize regional imbalances effective. The scientific analysis will also help in resolving most of the problems emanating from regional movements. This is an attempt to understand the historical factors that gave rise to regional imbalance in Orissa. It is also attempt to analyse and understand the emergence and spread of sub-regional movement like Koshal; movement in western Orissa. Finally, this study analyse the nature of implications of state responses to the problems of regional imbalances in Orissa. This study analyses the Koshal statehood movement in order to explain how regional backwardness can express itself.

Hypotheses

The present study is based on the following hypotheses:

I. The emergence of Koshal movement in western Orissa is a response to the regional developmental disparities, unequal distribution of political power, authority and continuous domination of coastal Orissa elites in both political and economic field of the state.
II. The balanced regional development in Orissa state could not be achieved because of inadequate state’s response which is deeply controlled by the dominant caste, class and regional elite.

**Methodology of the Study**

In a comparative political analysis a consistent method and adequate research tools are necessary. The following is an attempt to discuss briefly the methodology adopted in the research work. The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources. The research has employed the available information of various government and non-government organisations such as the district gazettes, government reports, census reports, newspapers and journals, research reports, documents, chronological records, proceedings, pamphlets etc. Apart from these, necessary information were collected from some sources preserved in Odisha state archives. Information were also collected through interface and conversations with prominent leaders leading the movement. It conducted many group discussions and elite interviews. The researcher interviewed many activists, university teachers and students, many leaders from various political parties and common people using both structured and non-structured questionnaire in order to understand their prospective. The study is to analyse and assesses the various dimensions of statehood movement through the study of Koshal Movement in order to understand how statehood movements emerge, and how they come to occupy the political imagination of the state linking itself to various variables. This could tell us how democratically governed states experienced such movements and how they respond to them raising many questions on the process. The detail objectives of the study are:

(i) To analyze and understand the implications of regional imbalance in India and particularly in Odisha

(ii) To understand the historical factors that gave rise to regional imbalance in Odisha

(iii) To analyze the emergence and spread of sub-regional Koshal movement in western Odisha

(iv) To identify the form of leadership and its support base

(v) To assess the impact of the movement on the socio-political life of Odisha
(vi) To analyze the nature of implications of response of the state to the problem of regional imbalance in Odisha

The primary survey data incorporated in this work, were collected from Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Bolangir and Kalahandi districts. The movement is confined to these districts as shown by the map of the movement. Seen against the backdrop of coastal and western Odisha divide these districts might appear as monolithic, but there exists differences among these districts. For example, Sundargarh is predominantly a tribal belt whereas Sambalpur has a mixed population. Although it is improper to divide the district of the state into distinct geographical region or cultural and linguistic region, due to colonial legacy the people residing in various districts of the state mostly identify them as belonging to different socio-cultural regions. The people of the state are mainly divided into four categories such as: adivasis (tribals), Sambalpurias, Berhampurias and Cuttakias. Interestingly people residing in certain contiguous district and speaking a similar colloquial dialect in Odia are mostly identified as: Sambalpurias, Berhampurias and Cuttakias. Throughout the study the term region has been used for the sub-region such as Koshal region.

The present work has made use of the descriptive analytical approach and interview to study the origin and development of the situation of underdevelopment in Odisha. It has attempted to make an enquiry into the subject from a historical perspective and then to make an analytical study of the causes and rise of the sub-regional movement in Odisha. The most important research tool used for the study was interview schedule to elicit information, attitude and opinion from activists, movement leaders, ideologues, student leaders, intellectuals and other respondents pertaining to various issues relating to regional conflicts and regional imbalance between coastal and western regions of Odisha. The interview schedule has broadly two parts, the first part dealing with the profile of the respondent; the second part was devoted to elicit their views on Koshal movement.

Besides it the relevant information of local newspapers, editorial leaflets and pamphlets were adequately collected to acquire an insight of problem of the region. Party literatures,
memorandums and representations were collected from party office and from persons involved in political activities and from student leaders. Apart from these library sources particularly books, journals, articles, census reports, Odisha statistical abstracts have been extensively used. Similarly the open ended conversation of the researchers with the informant people of the region were recorded and appropriately used for the present study. Such exercises were found to be really helpful in obtaining data on real situations. In social science research observations is one of the primary research instruments. The deliberate and sustained personal observation is an indispensable part of an empirical enquiry. In the present study, this tool proved to be very useful, as most information related to the study could not be gathered from secondary sources. Mainly the mobilization pattern of the leaders pertaining to the movement has been observed. Many of the significant observations could not have been recorded in the present study if the researcher did not have an advantage of a long stay in the districts during the field work.

A sincere effort was made to be as objective as possible. Before we proceed from research setting to the collection of data, it becomes necessary to draw a reliable sample of the whole population under investigation. In the modern empirical study sampling is the basis of the scientific investigation because it is not possible for the researcher with limited means and time to undertake the survey of the whole population.

Hence, research in modern time is invariably conducted by a means of sample survey. The following research design was followed for identification of sampled units. As mentioned earlier the study has selected Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Bolangir and Kalahandi district as they are the area of the Koshal movement. After the selection of the district the researcher met with activists of movements, leaders, student’s leaders, intellectuals, ideologue and other individuals. The scope of the research work is deliberately set within the limits of the subject matter i.e. sub-regional Koshal movement. The main objective of the work is to present a true picture of how sub-regional sentiments have affected the political orientations, inclinations, aggregation and articulation of interests.
Organization of the Study

The work has been divided into introduction, conclusion and five main chapters.

Introduction

The introduction part deals with the objective questions, hypothesis and methodology of the study.

Chapter One: Conceptualizing Sub-Regionalism: The Theoretical framework

This chapter provides a theoretical framework for the study of sub-regionalism in general and the study of under development and movement for statehood in Orissa. In doing so, this chapter has attempted to conceptualize region and regionalism. This chapter discusses components of regionalism, typology of regionalism, various perspectives of understanding of regionalism.

Chapter Two: Contextualizing Sub-Regionalism in Orissa

This chapter provides a historical account of how regional backwardness emerged in Orissa. It focuses on the emergence of sub-regionalism in Orissa. It deals with the historical factors like anti-merger resistance, Hirakud agitations, and emergence of Ganatantra Parishad and Rourkela agitations which are responsible for growth of sub-regionalism in Orissa. It discusses the history of Oriya nationalism in order to contextualize sub-regionalism in Orissa and uncover the genesis of regionalism. It provides an account of movement against construction of big dams, displacement and exploitation of natural resources in backward regions. It also analyses factors responsible for the growth of regionalism.

Chapter Three: Analyzing Under Development: The case of Koshal Region

This chapter empirically analyses the socio-economic disparity and political inequality existing between the coastal and western region in Orissa. It gives a theoretical richness in order to understand under development and sub-regional socio-economic disparity in Orissa. It employs demographic features, urbanization, education, infrastructure, health, agriculture and poverty in order to compare both the regions empirically. The main focus of the chapter is to explain the issue of relative deprivation which exist in western Orissa.
The socio-economic and political indicators have been treated as the crucial variables giving rise to sub-regionalism in Orissa.

Chapter Four: Methods and Social Base of Mobilization: The Case of Koshal Movement in Orissa

This chapter analyses the methods and social base of mobilization in Koshal movement. It provides a vivid account of process of articulation and employment of various means in the mobilization for a separate state in western Orissa. It discusses the means applied by the movement in order to reach out to wider public in the region and to present itself as a viable force. In this process of mobilization new demands have grown, such as demands for High Court bench in western Orissa, demand for development council, statehood movement for Koshal region. The rises of new type of assertion to safeguard Koshali identity have been analysed. This chapter also analyses the emergence of new organizations in the process and their activities. It also focus on the origin of a political party.

Chapter Five: Regional Backwardness, Statehood Movement and State Response in Western Orissa

This is also an empirical chapter which attempts to analyse the state response towards the Koshal movement. It discusses the non-state response as well. It analyses most of the state response in order to pacify and bridge regional disparities. Many schemes have been introduced by Govt. of Orissa to bridge regional disparity which this chapter has attempted to analyse. Its main focus is on the scheme of KBK districts, WODC, perspective plan etc. It comprehensively analyses the response of the state government in the form of public policy intervention in order to minimize regional disparity. The policy measures are the best indicators to measure the state response which this work has attempted to do.

Conclusion

The concluding part discusses the findings of the study.
Chapter One

Conceptualizing Sub-Regionalism: The Theoretical Framework

Regional identity, sometimes running parallel but often in competition with, if not in opposition to the national identity, has been a perennial feature of Indian democratic politics. The nature of this regional identity needs to be analysed in terms of the social and cultural forces that have been at work. Though the term region is a contextual one, regionalism has acquired through successive phases a distinct connotation in an academic analysis of the Indian politics. The terms are now used to indicate an agglomeration of all those forces that are generally considered to be centrifugal, polarised to centralism and nationalism.

As far as the term regionalism in multicultural context is concerned, there is enormous conceptual ambiguity for a variety of reasons. First, the distinction between regionalism and regional cultural nationalism gets blurred as the provincial units in multicultural states organized mostly on primordial-cultural basis are treated as regions. Second the study of regionalism in this context utilises different sets of criteria to analyse the term region. Third, nationalism shown by the smaller and peripheral cultural communities in these states is dubbed as expression of regionalism from perspective of the state and the mainstream culture and languages. All these create confusion in the understanding of region and regionalism in multicultural situation. It is therefore relevant to have a conceptual clarity to understand these terms in proper sense in the multicultural context.

Regionalism is a subsidiary process of political integration in India. It is a manifestation of those residual elements which do not find expression in the national polity and national culture, and being excluded from the centrality of the new polity, express themselves in political discontent and political exclusionism. It could include forces that the gravitational or the centripetal forces of the society fail to absorb, assimilate and
internalize\(^1\). The problems of India are peculiarly Indian in nature. It has inherited those from the complex socio-political situation. This regional consciousness which emanates from a sense of identity with a geographical area, is a social reality. This brings up the issue involving autonomy and administrative decentralization. But the geographical factor is not the only one to generate regionalism. Economic interests and ethnic factors such as, cultural, traditional or linguistic peculiarities also cause regionalism. “Regionalism is of special significance in the countries of the Third World where the traditional societies have been passing through a process of reduction of their primordial sentiments to civil loyalties”\(^2\). The linguistic determination of state boundaries was the Congress demand during the pre-independence days. But as member of the Linguistic Committee, Pundit Nehru observed—“The work of sixty years of the Indian National Congress was standing before us, face to face with century old India of narrow loyalties, petty jealousies and ignorant prejudices engaged in moral conflict and we are simply horrified to see how thin the ice upon which we were skating was. Some of the ablest men in the country came before us a confidently and emphatically stated that language in this country and represented culture, race, history, individuality and finally a sub-nation”\(^3\).

There are opinions against organization of states on linguistic lines. Despite the views opposing the demand for linguistic state of Andhra was conceded. “Within the decade India had been almost entirely reorganized along linguistic lines and a wide range of observers were wondering aloud whether the country’s political unity would survive this wholesale concession to narrow loyalties, petty jealousies and ignorant prejudices”\(^4\). The new philosophy which came into operation in new India was that the unilingual states were more stable than multilingual states. Regionalism is a double-edged feeling. It is at once a feeling of consciousness of kind which on the one hand binds together those who have it so strongly that it overrides all differences arising out of economic conflicts or

---

social gradations and on the other, serves them from those who are not of their kind. It is a longing not to belong to any group. The existence of this feeling is the foundation of a stable democratic state\textsuperscript{5}.

The new states have multiple problems. “Regionalism had been an important primordial factor in national politics”\textsuperscript{6}. Primordial discontent arises from a sense of political suffocation and also from a sense of political dismemberment. In India experiment with federalism experienced peculiar tensions from the days of its inception. The linguistic reorganization of the states led to the rising problems of minority groups. They could not be satisfied with the new arrangement and this led to a number of disturbing situations. “Thus regionalism has been the basis of political competition and the motive force for identity formation”\textsuperscript{7}. The history of a state plays an important role in the identification of new crisis. India has got a historical identity of its own but at the same time it is to be understood that the states constituting India may also have their own respective identities. Despite the integration of princely ruled states in 1948 and linguistic reorganization of states in 1956 several historical identities have survived.

Thus, it is observed that states were torn between their pre-integration and post-integration identities and the imprints of the psychic split have a critical role in the politics of the state in general and in the development of loyalty structures, factions and regional complexes in particular\textsuperscript{8}. “It is exciting to examine how old and new identities have been weakened or fortified in the wake of democratic politics in the country”\textsuperscript{9}. The linguistic reorganization also caused the tension among linguistic minority groups which later on metamorphosed into several movements. The states which enlarged their geographical frontier after the integration of the princely states had two distinct regions having separate culture, political orientation and economic development. The level and

\textsuperscript{5} B.R.Ambedkar (1955), \textit{Thoughts on Linguistic States}, India.
\textsuperscript{6} C.Geertz (1963), ‘The Integrative Problem’ in Geertz (ed.) \textit{Old Societies and New States}, Free Press, p.111.
\textsuperscript{8} Iqbal Narain (ed.) (1967), \textit{State Politics in India}, Meenakshi, Meerut.
pattern of economic development of the regions shaped the nature of politics in the state. The backward region of the state nurtures psychological separation from the developed zone and it is reflected in their attitude, behaviour and in the participation in the democratic process of a country also. This depends upon the availability of political leadership to exploit the inferior complexes of the population for their political benefit. A study of regionalism in Orissan politics thus becomes more relevant.

1.0 Conceptualising Region

A definition of regionalism would require clarity about the term region. A region may be defined on the basis of its topography, economic, social structure and pattern of life. Odum and Moore in the compilation on American regions listed several definitions on region. According to them, the common aspects in many definitions involve, ‘some spatial generalizations, that is, a set of geographical traits which define and distinguish a particular area and give it a distinct character’. A region is a nucleus of social aggregation for a variety of purposes. It is always regarded as a unit having concern for its homogeneity and identity. A geographer tries to emphasise on geographical area, an anthropologist a cultural area, while for a sociologist it is composed of a constellation of communities characterized by “homogeneity of economic and social structure”. Nonetheless, for a political scientist, it is a political sub-system with components of its own and interactions among these components laying a boundary within the national system. A region becomes significant in a nation only when it becomes a unit dominated by widely prevalent sentiments of ‘togetherness’, a sense of particularistic and separate identity. When the particularistic attitude of the region claims recognition of its cultural identity, it is better understood as regionalization or regional movement.

---

In the same vein Schwartzberg defines region as “as a perceived segment of the time-space continuum differentiated from others on the basis of one or more defining characteristics”. These characteristics and the region they defined may be of many types: Regions according to Schwartzberg could be ‘natural’ (e.g. tropical rain forest region), political (e.g. Orissa, Calcutta city, a district etc), economic (e.g. wet rice areas, coal mining area, etc), cultural (e.g. area of the Tamil or Bengali speech).13

On the basis of their recognition, Schwartzberg classified regions into: ‘naively given’, ‘instituted’, and ‘denoted’.14 A ‘Naively’ given region is one which is recognized as a meaningful territorial entity by the people who live there and or by other to whom it is of some concern.15 The limits of such regions are vague as they are not vigorously defined by the people who perceive them. At the root of such a region is the ‘we’ feeling which emanates from a sense of history and or culture. Instituted regions are so called because they are instituted by human agency as distinct and discrete units limited the aerial extent of operation of certain functions. These include particularly the territory of the states and these administrative divisions and sub-divisions and similar units instituted by religious bodies or other social organizations. The Republic of India and its provincial units came under this category. The ‘Denoted regions’ are purposefully delimited by scholars and census officials and others concern with particular problems.16

1.1 Concept of Regionalism

Regionalism is a complex concept which has been defined in various ways by several social scientists. Some analysts define regionalism as a manifestation of “world federalism” and an intermediate state between administrative decentralization and federalism. They advocate that politics of regionalism involves such diverse problems of modern political and cultural life as those of minorities, administrative decentralization,
local-self government, autonomy, the cult of homeland and slogans such as ‘sons of soil’ expressing local patriotism. Obviously regionalism is the manifestation of particularism of various socio-political groups which is generated from a variety of factors, such as geographical isolation, independent historical heritage, racial, ethnic or religious loyalties. Some western scholars have identified regionalism as the ‘by-product of modernization’\(^\text{17}\). From a positive angle, regionalism connotes a quest for self-identity and self-fulfillment on the part of a particular region vis-à-vis overall national development. Hence, the quest for regional identity is not always antithetical to the process of nation-building. Negatively, regionalism reflects a psyche of alienation from the national mainstream which originates due to excessive centralization and the discriminative attitude of the ruling elite. In case the leaders and politicians in a given political system fail to accommodate various regional aspirations of various regions and sub-cultural groups, regionalism can certainly contribute to the over-all national development and national integration. Thus in order to provide a positive shape to regionalism much depends upon the policy makers and the ruling elite who can hopefully maintain a balance between the centrifugal and centripetal forces in a given system\(^\text{18}\).

The disparities in the economic and the politico-administrative spheres, and linguistic, racial, cultural differences create serious problems in nation-building process. The forces let loose by the process of modernization in the developing societies often give rise to regional identities, which in turn provide social base for inter-regional and intra-regional power politics. Regionalism, therefore, forms an important aspect of studying political processes of these societies. The problem of regionalism seems to be particularly related to the problems of modern politico-economic life i.e. the balanced economic development of all the regions of a country, equal regional representation in the national politico-administrative life, problem of minorities and localism.

Regionalism, emanates where one or more such factors, as geographical distinctiveness, local interests, regional, political and economic disparities and socio-cultural differences exist and is used as instruments of politics\textsuperscript{19}. It becomes all the more acute when these factors, overlap within a single region. The modern nation-state being more differentiated often provides not only for administrative and political diversities, but when, linguistic, cultural, economic factors are involved, these differences together give rise to regionalism. Thus, economic, politico-administrative, socio-cultural differences are the basic factors behind regionalism. P.C Mathur observes that regionalism occurs, in real life, in varying mixtures with linguism and communalism and there are even examples of regionalism co-existing with casteism and in such cases it becomes difficult to decide as to whether a given political phenomenon is to be considered under the title of regionalism or some other politically relevant social force, e.g. linguism\textsuperscript{20}. International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (IESS) defines a ‘region’ on the basis of its geography, economy, social structure and the pattern of life. A region is a homogeneous area with physical and cultural characteristics distinct from those of neighbouring areas. As part of a national domain a region is sufficiently unified to have a consciousness of its customs and ideals and thus possesses a sense of identity, distinct from the rest of the country. The term ‘regionalism’ properly represents the regional idea in action as an ideology, as a social movement or as the theoretical basis for regional planning; it is also applied to the scientific task of delimiting and analyzing regions as entities lacking formal boundaries\textsuperscript{21}.

The concept may be defined, in simple words, as “ones’ love for and the feeling of sentimental attachment to one’s region of birth and residence over and above other regions”\textsuperscript{22}. Regional consciousness is taken up as a concept developing from a sense of

identity. Regionalism is a social reality whose fabric is woven with the threads of psycho-social behaviour of the individual and community in a region for a number of generations “giving rise to a living tradition in such a society lending meaning to the particular life of that region”\textsuperscript{23}.

Rasheeduddin Khan has developed following criteria for recognizing a region in India “Maximum homogeneity within and maximum identity without where homogeneities are able to establish on ten counts: (1) language dialect, (2) social composition (communities/jatis), (3) ethnic regions, (4) demographic features (5) area (geographic continuity), (6) cultural pattern (7) economy and economic life (8) historical antecedents (9) political backgrounds (10) psychological make-up and felt consciousness of group identity. The main concern in this exercise is to eliminate factors contributing to heterogeneity and to coalesce factors promoting homogeneity\textsuperscript{24}.

“Regionalism”, according to the Dictionary of Social Sciences, means a movement, which may be defined as:

(a) A cultural and political movement, seeking to protect and foster an indigenous culture and to promote autonomous political institutions in a particular region
(b) An administrative and political movement, aiming the creation of a democratised and integrative government structure at an intermediate level between state and traditional organs of local government\textsuperscript{25}. The definition given by the Dictionary of Social Sciences is only concerned with the domestic political aspects of regionalism. Similarly some other scholars have also defined regionalism in the domestic concepts.

R.A.Seligman and Johnson have identified regionalism with a counter movement to any exaggerated or oppressive form of centralization. In their view regionalism may involve

\textsuperscript{24} Khan Rasheeduddin,\textit{(1973) The Regional Dimension, Seminar, New Delhi, No.164, April}, p.39.
complex of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and economic forces which leads to the emergence of ‘sub-national’ groups.

Kauser Azam, defines regionalism as, “manifestation of those residual elements, which do not find expression in the national polity and national culture and being excluded from the centrality of the new polity, express themselves in political discontent and political exclusionism. It could include forces that the gravitational; or the centripetal forces of a society fail to absorb, assimilate and internalize”26.

K.C.Pandey defined regionalism as a multidimensional composite phenomenon as well as built-in process within nationalism27. It is further held that regionalism as a phenomenon emerges out of the culmination of variations pertaining to socio-cultural, economic and political spheres. Two sets of components, the subjective and the objective, determine the nature of regionalism. The subjective components are ways of living, customs and traditions, art forms, language and literature, social heritage, beliefs, attitudes and values as related to a group of the people termed as a regional group. The objective component includes the territorial region and the accompanied man-environment complex within which the regional group lives. Thus regionalism has also been characterized both as a doctrine as well as a tendency implying many things which are mentioned below:

a) decentralization of administration on a regional basis within a nation where there is excessive centralization and concentration of administrative and political power;

b) a socio-cultural counter-movement against the imposition of a monolithic national unity by imposing a particular political ideology, language or cultural pattern to foster national integration

c) a political counter-movement aiming to achieve greater autonomy of sub-cultural regions through greater degree of self-government within the federal structure of a nation;

d) a tendency for separatism to fulfill the political aspirations of a regional group living in a specified socio-cultural region

In short, regionalism is said to exist in a region of people held a strong feeling of deprivation, and aggregate and articulate demands and keep pressure on the authoritative decisions makers till their demands are satisfied.

P.C.Mathur further elaborates regionalism as essentially a movement organized by people of a geographical limit or discrete area basing on the demands of attaining socio-political, economic and cultural autonomy from the domination of a particular community or due to counter-welfare policy of the authoritative decision-maker. According to P.C.Mathur, regionalism is manifested through socio-economic variables such as caste, ethnicity, language, tribal dispossessions, economic disparity, and occupational pattern, diversity of political institutions and attitudes and ethos of life. Politically, regionalism is also viewed as perceived disparities rather than on real economic differential from various interpretations, perhaps it can be deduced that regionalism essentially emerges from a sense of deprivation and fear of domination and insecurity.

The renowned liberal thinker Rousseau perceived regionalism, as a reaction against nation-state and nationalism; for the latter tended to disregard, in the name of nation, the independent local traditions, with their own long history, and the racial, ethnic or linguistic particularities of a local region, and the expressions they found in the literature, dance and music, folktales, handicrafts and forms or worship of the local region.

---

1.2 Causes of Regionalism

The existential basis of regionalism may be found in historical, social, political and economic reasons. Satish Chandra, observed that historical injustices were done to the regional groups\(^\text{31}\). According to P.C.Mathur, the real cause of regionalism does not lie in the imperialist policy but in the split consciousness\(^\text{32}\). Prof. Iqbal Narain and K.C.Pande have held the view that regionalism is a product of scarce resources, acute competition and inequitable distributive justice\(^\text{33}\).

In India there is an uneven economic development which leads to regional movement. Some regions are more industrialized and economically developed than others. Some parts of the country are highly westernized than other parts and there is the growth of a progressive conservative dichotomy. Economically, some parts of the country are very poor and they create regional movement and that was the main reason behind the movement in Assam as well as in Darjeeling. Administratively and politically some regions are ruled by the opposition and regional parties which demand self-identity, more autonomy and more powers for the region’s leading to regional movement. In India, a peculiar problem like geographical border because of inter-state river water, trade and commerce, electricity, road transport along with cultural diversities lead to regional movement, particularly demanding redrawing of territorial border of the state. Thus, regionalism, economic regionalism, political administrative regionalism and territorial regionalism. These dimensions create three forms of regionalism in India as Prof. Iqbal Narain has described, namely, supra regionalism, interstate regionalism and intrastate regionalism. The first one is an expression of group identity of several states which join hands to take common stand on an issue of mutual interests vis-a-vis another group of states or even the Union. In the second case, regionalism has been coextensive with the state boundaries. In both these two cases, regionalism has appeared as a movement against the Union. But intra-state regionalism has appeared as a movement against the

\(^{32}\) *Ibid*, p.185.
\(^{33}\) *Ibid*, p.177, 188.
Union. But intra-state regionalism is directed against the state governments rather than the Union of India and such regional demands are like the creation of new and separate political and administrative units within the existing state structure and of some regions within a state for equitable and fair treatment. These forms of regionalism have produced a number of demands on the national polity, such as to give identity to particular language, religion and ethnic factors of the region, more regional autonomy and power, constitutional status of the region, separate statehood within the nation and in extreme case secession from the nation. To achieve these regional demands, sometimes recourse have been taken to put forth the claims in the forum of state legislatures and Parliament or to make agitations and in worst cases to indulge in terrorist violence.  

1.3 Components of Regionalism

Regionalism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon in terms of its components at once geographical, historic-cultural, economic, politico-administrative and psychic.

Geographical Components

The factor of geographical boundaries to which the people of an area usually relate their quest of a regional identity also differentiates, at least in degrees, if not in kind, the phenomenon of minority nationalist movements from regionalism. The point of differentiation is that minority nationalist movements may have a somewhat diffused geographical underpinning in comparison to regionalism, where it is rather concrete, though only in a relative sense. It will be worthwhile to recall, that after the independence various princely states had been integrated to form a new and bigger entities. The new states which were thus brought into being came to develop split personalities with the loyalties of their citizens (and even of their political elites and the civil servants) being torn between old territorial boundaries and new territorial structures. The princes and feudal-lords often receives overwhelming support in their former territories in the newly created states and relatively much less in other parts of the same state. The geographical

distinctiveness gives a symbolic identity which needs economic and political props for its resurgence from time to time\textsuperscript{36}.

**Socio-cultural factor**

Socio-cultural differences between regions fan regional feelings to some extent. Socio-cultural symbols often provided the necessary inputs for identity formation for a people living in a particular region\textsuperscript{37}. It may be observed that a culture may contain various sub-cultural zones within its area. Likewise, a linguistic community may show dialectical diversity or colloquial variation within a geographical area. This means that people speaking the same language or sharing a common culture may show diverse cultural practices and speech form depending upon, their regional affiliation. The differences are seen mainly in the sphere of customs, traditions, social practices, beliefs, rituals, rites, fairs, festivals, ceremonies, food, dress, deities, institutions, values, speech, agricultural equipments, mode of cultivation, housing patterns etc.

These cultural ingredients, of a regional sub-culture basically originate from ‘oral’, ‘folk’, or ‘little’, tradition and are treated as variants of the mainstream culture or the great tradition. Usually, the language and script of the mainstream community are used for official purposes and mainstream culture is used to homogenize the people. This policy creates a situation of negligence and inattention to the regional sub-cultures and languages which in turn motivates the people of a region to agitate against the mainstream cultural hegemony. Several regional movements in India such as Vidharbha, Telangana, Saurashtra and Uttarakhand used sub-cultural elements to further their interest’s vis-à-vis the mainstream group. Regional caste, sub-caste and kinship differences also motivate regional feeling within a broad socio-linguistic area\textsuperscript{38}. Caste is a factor of regional tension in a number of states in India. For example, mutual hostility

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, p.23-24.
exists between Vokkaligas and Lingayats in Karnataka, Jats and Yadavas in U.P, Kammans and Reddies in Andhra.

**Language**

Language is one of the most important components of regionalism in India, “the languages are not an artificial creation but a natural growth and formation of its inner springs of thoughts pure and undefiled. Each language has its own soul which it gives its body and shape”\(^{39}\). It has the propensity of unity as well as causing disharmony, emotional frenzy and destabilization of the political system. It is also an expression of shared life, thoughts, structure and values of a distinctive group. By uniting people of a language emotionally, it increases their bargaining powers. If intra-state regionalism divides people speaking the same language, militant linguism also unites them and equips them to wage a struggle for the welfare of their followers. Language is like a double-edged weapon which can be used for offense as well as defence\(^{40}\).

The importance of language component is well established by the reorganization of states in 1956 on the recommendations of the State Reorganization Commission. Linguistic and cultural homogeneity was considered desirable for according statehood. The linguistic reorganization of states gave ascendancy to ‘linguistic regionalism’ and as a result there were demands for according statehood from different parts of the country. However, it ought to be submitted that “together with language, many variables and critical factors like ethnic-cum-economic considerations (Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura), religion and script and sentiments (Haryana and Punjab), language-cum-culture (Maharashtra and Gujarat), historical and political factors (U.P and Bihar) integration of princely states and the need for viable groupings (M.P and Rajasthan), and of course, language-cum-social distinctiveness (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Mysore, Bengal, and Orissa) have played a decisive role in the composition of the Indian federation”\(^{41}\).


**Economic Component**

The crux of regionalism lies in economic under development of the country. Despite the development since independence, much needs to be done. The scarcity of technical knowhow, the alarming rate of population growth, corruption, deteriorating law and order situation have created a dismal mosaic of politico-economic life in the nation. Coupled with this, the new developmental schemes have generated a race among different groups and regions for acquiring more and more economic gains. This has also resulted in the emergence of local leadership who very often raise the bogey of regionalism to strengthen their bargaining posture with the centre. In this period of nation-building, some regions of the state may acquire an advantage over others. Thus economically, regionalism is the outcome of some real or perceived sense of internal colonialism, the result of mal-development or a symmetrical development. Regionalism is the response of unequal sharing of benefits of developmental activities\(^{42}\).

The economic imbalances are exploited by the regional elites, who engineer regional movements taking benefits of the economic grievances of a region and demand distributive justice for their region. According to the report of the State Reorganization Commission, demands for creation of new states were mainly based on allegedly unfair and unequal distribution of development benefits and expenditure in the multi lingual state\(^{43}\). Telangana movement is the best example of this type of regionalism. Feelings of discontent in the backward and depressed regions of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar, U.P, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan further support this argument. There had been agitation for the location of steel plant, oil refineries and heavy industries, irrespective of the fact whether the state has the necessary paraphernalia to establish and manage them and the centre is accused of partition attitude, the conflict between the migrant and the ‘son of the soil’ also called ‘nativist’ movement is manifestation of the economic factor. The Assamese Bengali conflict in Assam, and Shiv Sena movement to oust non-Maharashtrians from Maharashtra are motivated mainly by the economic compulsion.

---


\(^{43}\) *Report of State Reorganization Commission*, p.225
Despite pulls and pressure for distributive justice, economic integration is at work. The National Five Year Plans have provided economic development to many backward regions. The impact of this economic benefit is that even economically backward regions have developed their separate identity and demand separate state but they do not want to secede from the union. Because they have realized that their economic well being lies in continuing as a part of the Union. Thus it can be argued, “that regional pressures emanating from economic compulsions are mere bargaining centers than secessionist moves. The balance of economic advantages in India at any rate is still in favour of Union rather than secession. This is further buttressed by the safeguards of cultural autonomy.”

**Politico-administrative component**

The other component of regionalism is politico-administrative that can accentuate and exploit the situation of regional feelings. The regional elites foment regional movements, just to create base for their political survival. In the beginning, the ideology of a regional movement remains vague, however, later on some key personality of the region defines and puts arguments for the justification of regional movement. The regional elites legitimate the movement on regional ideology. Thus “Regionalism is in fact a conflict between national elites and regional elites”\(^4\). In the late sixties the Congress Party suffered infighting trends. These led to agitations like the Telangana movement followed by the Shiv Sena which was very much held on the behest of the Congress Party. During this time parties like the DMK and AIDMK (Tamil Nadu), Akali Dal (Punjab), Jharkhand Party (Bihar) were thriving by exploiting the regional sentiments of the people. This also applies to Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and Gopal Sena in Kerala. Even national parties like Congress and Janata have to depend on regional influences and therefore they recruit regionally influential persons in the party who can mobilise support for their party.

---

Regional aspirations were fulfilled by power and patronage. The political elite favour one region at the cost of the other. Thus regionalism always thrives on real or fancied charges of political discrimination which has, in fact, become an important facet of politics of regionalism itself”

Psychic Component

The roots of Regionalism are to be found in the minds of men. Every individual is partly regionalistic and partly nationalistic. Thus he carries a split personality. There is a tendency of regionalistic sentiments taking primacy over the nationalistic sentiments. Rasheduddin Khan maintains that “To be Indian” is not necessarily not to be a Maharashtrian. Similarly, “national loyalties do not demand that other loyalties should be eliminated”. The split personality phenomenon can be best illustrated by an observation of M.P, Lokenath Mishra, “My first ambition is the glory of mother India. I know it my heart of hearts that I am Indian first and an Indian last. But when you say you are a Bihari, I say I am an Oriya. When you say you are a Bengali, I say I am an Oriya, otherwise, I am an Indian”. Thus emotional overtones are attached to regionalism and it becomes a manifestation of emotional and sub-national socio-cultural forces that is why it is also regarded as a quest for self-identity.

1.4 Typology of Regionalism

One can now attempt a broader taxonomy of regionalism. A plural society like India would create institutional plurality and hence Indian regionalism cannot afford to be mono-model. It is multi-model in essence and can be classified as under the following:

Transcendental Regionalism

It would be wrong to equate regionalism to any particular region. Sometimes it transcends national boundaries and leaps ahead of and above the ties that bound a person

---

to a particular region and becomes mega-regional. The Sikhs of Punjab are regional in the sense of being Punjabis but they are sympathetic to the Punjabis living across the border. A Pakistani cricket team touring India played a cricket match in Amritsar and Pakistani visitors from across the Wagah border came in large numbers to watch that particular fixture. They were given an emotional welcome by the Sikh of Punjab and were greeted “as our brothers from across the border”. It was mega-Punjabi regionalism resting on fraternity links and relationship with a people who once belonged to the same region but were divided by religion and political boundary differentiation. In the same way, one can say that Indian Sikhs have their fraternal links with the Sikhs of U.K., U.S.A and Canada, though it is rooted more in religious fundamentalism than strictly regional consciousness of any sort. In a similar vein one can argue that Bengali speaking people of West Bengal and Bangladesh do maintain cultural and linguistic relationships and in 1971, this spirit manifested itself in a mega-regional consciousness that transcended national frontiers.\(^{51}\)

**Transitory Regionalism**

This is a temporary sort of regional urge which is issue specific and is witnessed in sporadic manifestation of temporary issues having a specific regional colouration. On the issue of division of composite state of Bombay in 1958, Maharashtra and Gujarat regions witnessed unprecedented regional unrest and people of these two states formed Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti and Maha Gujarat Janata Parishad to press their regional demand of bifurcating the state of Bombay. After a prolonged agitation, their demand was conceded and these organizations ceased to exist after the formation of separate states of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Thus, regionalism can be ephemeral, transitory and issue-specific also where it comes to solving a particular problem. The moment the particularistic demand is fulfilled; regional bodies stop agitation politics and revert back to the task of consolidating the gains achieved.\(^{52}\)

---

\(^{51}\) Bhawani Singh (1993), *Opcit*, p.17.

\(^{52}\) *Ibid*, p.18.
Supra-state Regionalism

This is yet another variant of regional consciousness and it expresses itself in the unity of a group of states, who are differentiated linguistically and culturally but they come together to give birth to a larger formation to resist or espouse a particular demand. Mostly such unity is forged for a negative purpose. The states of Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu together forged a non-formal union resting on multiple-identity of these culturally and linguistically disparate and territorially identifiable units for the purpose of resisting the imposition of Hindi on them.

A union like this too is non-formal and issue-specific but when one region is confronting another region, the problem also becomes intra-specific between them. The union that southern states forge rests on Dravidian ethnicity, language and culture. It is a queer case of states speaking different languages and having other dissimilarities coming closer and taking a common stand on it. The state that form group identity are not the one who have a dispute free record and one often witnesses intra-group rivalries and tensions among them but some common issue brings them together to one platform and they develop a negative consensus among them to oppose some issue.

Inter-State Regionalism

This is a very common form of regionalism which juxtaposes one state against another on a specific matter. The distribution of river waters and territorial disputes fall in this category. To which state Chandigarh should belong whether to–Haryana or Punjab, creates inter-state discord. So also the city of Belgaon in Karnataka has become a bone of contention between Maharashtra and Karnataka and rival claims to its accession to either state continue to be made for decades on and with no prospects of an early amicable solution. The issue of construction of Sutlej-Yamuna link canal has embittered relations between Punjab and Haryana. The distribution of river waters of Punjab brought the people of states of Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh to logger heads and caused avoidable tensions. So did the question of distribution of Narmada waters between Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan.
Intra-State Regionalism

Finally, it is a matter of common knowledge that every state has its own depressed pockets and the affected people do voice their protest against such discrimination, economic neglect and deprivation. Several examples can be given to draw home the point of intra-state regional feuds. People of Vidharbha region in Maharashtra, of Saurashtra region in Gujarat and Telangana region in Andhra Pradesh were demanding separation from their parent states because of intra-state disputes\(^{53}\).

1.5 Perspective of Regionalism

Regionalism can be studied through different perspectives such as dominant, defensive, nationalistic, assimilationist, accommodationist, communicationist, elitist, comparative, competitive and regionalist perspectives. Though, in the words of M. Bhaskaran Nair, “it is difficult to say where regionalism ends and national perspective begins”\(^{54}\), we may attempt giving the general implications of the above mentioned perspectives.

Dominant Perspective

This perspective belongs to the centrist group of people. Viewed in the dominant perspective, the “narrow local interest” must be subordinated to the overall interests of the country, for, only when the country is strong and self-reliant, the problems of smaller groups can be resolved. In this view, the dominance of the ‘centre’ over the ‘regions’ must precede the ‘autonomy’ of the regions. Mrs. Indira Gandhi is said to be viewing the problems of regionalism in this perspective as found in the instance of her speech on the occasion of her visit to the Northeastern Region on April 11, 1981 and her views were endorsed by the conference of the seven Pradesh Congress (I) committees of the Northeastern region held on April 10-11, 1981, which considered the various forces developing in the region as “anti-national”, “secessionist”, “parochial” and

\(^{53}\) Ibid, pp.18-99.

\(^{54}\) M. Bhaskaran Nair (1985), *The Emerging Middle Class, Regional Parties and Regionalism in Meghalaya*, paper UGC-NEHU sponsored Seminar, 2-5, September, p.6.
“fissiparous”\textsuperscript{55}. This dominant attitude, according to Mohan Lal Sharma, perpetuates the dichotomized modernity-tradition syndrome which regards nationalism and regionalism as two different categories hostile to each other. The proponents of this view think that the transformation or dissolution of traditional ties were essential for the emergence of a modern developed nation. Sharma thinks that this intellectual tradition is initiated by Max Weber and developed by Parsons. Scholars who belong to this tradition imply that for the growth of a modern nation, ‘individual’ and not the ‘social groups’ should be considered as unit of participation—which is essential for the replacement of ‘primordial’ loyalties by ‘civil loyalties’. G.S.Ghurye, Clifford Geertz, M.N.Srinivas, Selig Harrison, Brij Mohan and V.S. Naipul were said to hold this dominant view\textsuperscript{56}. Khawaja Ahmad Abbas can be considered to belong to this category of scholars because he wrote:

\begin{quote}
Regionalism and parochialism are two enemies of which we have to be aware. Parochial parties...strike at the very roots of democracy; they make the development of a rational outlook difficult if not impossible. They breed arrogance and the ‘I-am-better-than-you’ attitude among vast masses of people which is the negation of broad humanism which should be our cherished aim\textsuperscript{57}.
\end{quote}

Those who look at regionalism in this perspective, therefore, tend to show a centrist bias in their approach to the problems arising out of regional movements.

\textbf{Defensive Nationalistic Perspective}

Regionalism has also been seen in a perspective with a view that regional movements are inspired by the spirit of ‘nationalism’ which may be called ‘Sub-Nationalism’. Approached from this angle, regionalism is perceived as a problem involving nationality question, emanating from scepticism and fear of losing ethno-cultural identity. Regionalism is nothing but the operationalization of the inbuilt defensive-mechanism in

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, p.49.
\textsuperscript{57} Khawaja Ahmad Abbas, “Education and National Integration” in Radhey Mohan (ed) \textit{Composite Culture and Indian Society}, New Delhi, Vichar, p.80.
the psyche of a culturally defined group, who feel that their identity is at stake in the face of dominant culture. It is a response to an apparent threat from alien rule and demographic influx from outside the region. This is what Amalendu Guha call’s ‘defensive nationalism’. The Assamese movement and other hill political movements in the Northeast India can be studied fruitfully in this perspective.

**Assimilationist Perspective**

Those who look at regionalism in the assimilationist perspective tend to confuse ‘unity’ with ‘uniformity’ and perceive the national life in terms of ‘mainstream’ and ‘sub-stream’. They do not sincerely share the belief that there can be a unity in diversity. They dream of a nation where the dominant culture permeates all the parts and regions, submerging the regional cultural traits until all of such traits are dissolved in the sea of the dominant culture. It is a non-nationality view “which holds that the process of modernization as it increases avenues of inter-community encounters should lead to progressive dissolution of regional identities. In that way upsurge of regionalism is described as setting the clock back and therefore, found incompatible with the demands of modern nation. The assimilationist is always scared of the regional and other movements as detractors of development, democracy and the nation itself”. Therefore, in the assimilationist point of view, there can be true national unity only when all the regional identities are wiped out, the sooner the better\(^5\).

**Accomodationist Perspective**

The Accomodationists, however, perceive India is a multi-nation state and stress on the diversity of Indian nation, not ruling out, of course, the possibility of unity and diversity. According to Prof. Pakem, “India is a multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-national state….the extent of diversity is greater in India than in any other country …there is also greater disparity in economic and cultural development among her depressed nationalities”.

---

These problems (of regionalism) could have been properly attended to by the powers that be had taken into consideration the First Clause of the First Article of the Indian Constitution which says, ‘India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States’. Now, the word ‘Union’ by itself does not indicate the principle of uniformity. Therefore, the authorities concerned should not, and cannot, expect that there should be uniformity of thought, aspiration, expression, and action in the country. Regionalism has to be accommodated. The old cliché that in India, we have unity amidst diversity has not been worn out yet. As such, any amount of effort to bring about any rule for or procedure of action at the expense of regionalism will be exercise in futility. We have to realize that the struggle in India is to make the country safe for diversity.

Mohan Lal Sharma observes that “The Accomodationist championing the cause of multi-nationality state system, holds them (regionalist movements) as natural expressions and expects the centre to be more charitable towards them”60. Others hold the view that multi-nationalities are a phenomenon of transition from a traditional-parochial to a modern-cosmopolitan society. Mohan Lal Sharma thinks such view is closer to the assimilationist thinking because even during the transitional stage their emphasis is on preservation of equilibrium which must be maintained by a central authority. Thus, while the Accomodationist would not give any prospect for regionalism, the Accomodationist would like to see that a strong bond of unity is evolved through mutual acceptance among regional groups as they respectively are and through the federal administrative relationship with the centre61.

**Communicationist Perspective**

There are those who regard the rise of regionalism to be due to some gap in social communication. In the Communicationist perspective, the problems of regionalism and national integration are thought to have stemmed from the presence of social communication gap between the ‘core’ and the ‘periphery’ and among the regions.

59 B.Pakem,(1985),” Nationalist Question in Hilly Areas of North East”, India, Paper, UGC-NEHU, Seminar on Regionalism, 2-5 September, p.3.
themselves. This view is based on the opinion that in order to have an integrated and cohesive system, there should be a fusing together of relatively different systems or sub-systems through a process of co-ordination by means of pluralist decision-making system.  

**Elitist Perspective**

Another angle from which the concept of regionalism is approached may be called ‘Elitist Perspective’. Viewed in this perspective, “regionalism is not something which is irrational and impulsive, but it is a cover or a plank through which the elites compete and fight for power”. Mass of the people may be hypnotized by talk of emotive issues, but this is cunningly raised as an ideological plank by a group of elite to generate mass pressure and control levers of power. The new and upcoming elite aspiring for power positions at regional or local level, and finding the moral channels unhelpful in that regard, is likely to support autonomy movements in the name of preservation of ethnic, lingual and cultural identity. The assertion on and articulation of regional interests very often serve the purpose of the dominant elite class of the region. A.K.Baruah observes, “regionalism as a concept develops from a sense of identity within a region and as an ideology….it emphasizes the distinct physical and cultural characteristics of a homogenous area….such an ideology serves the interests mainly of the most dominant section of the people of the region concerned”.

**Comparative Perspective**

Regionalism may be observed in the comparative perspective by which we can know the difference in the nature and quantity of the components of regional movements in various places. This approach will be of great help in distinguishing one regional movement from

---

another and perhaps in suggesting differential treatments for each of them according to their natures and components. For instance, the difference between the regional movements of the Assamese, with its uni-faceted identity worked out around the language issue on the one hand and the regional movements of the hill people in Northeast India with their multi-faceted identity on the other, can be analysed from this approach.

**Competitive Perspective**

R.N.Mishra explains regionalism as “a motive force for identity formation and a basis for political competition”. The competitiveness of regionalism, according to him, was fostered indirectly by the Indian National Congress’s realization of the regional distinct cultures and its demand for regional reconstruction on the basis of language. The demand for recognition of language as the basis of administrative and political units gives rise to similar demands based on ethnic and other social factors. Added to the problem of states re-organization on linguistic basis was the problem of dislocation of minorities as a consequence of such reorganization process. The regionalist movements in the Indian states, particularly in the bigger ones, can be considered to have developed on this basis. The language riot in Assam, the Telangana movement in Andhra Pradesh, the Jharkhand movement in Bihar and such other movements in bigger states were living examples of regionalism of this variety.

**Regionalist Perspective**

Opposed to the dominant-centrist approach to the problem of regionalism is the perspective of the regionalists themselves. The regionalists, in the garb of protecting the basic identity and culture of the region, often show a tendency of looking at everything in a compartmental fashion, thus, becoming over-scared of any national process to take shape in their regions. The result of such attitude can be a disadvantage for the region itself. The ‘suitability to the local conditions and acceptability to the local genius’

---

68 Ibid.
principle is quite sound in formulating plan programmes for the regions. But, it is regarded as best if the national planners and the regionalist planners put their heads together and settle the suitability or acceptability question in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust. In the regionalists view, the centre cannot be strong, stable and prosperous if the regions are weak, unstable and backward. But, the process intended to remove the weakness and backwardness should be managed, in the regionalist point of view, so as not to create the region more unstable in terms of demographic composition and cultural balance. That is why the regionalist is always at a dilemma between the two choices of accepting the development process at the probable cost of losing or distributing the cultural balance, and of maintaining the regional identity at the cost of the benefits of the developmental process. Here is a vicious circle in which the regionalists always finds himself entangled, that is, if the developmental process is not staged in the region, it is not likely that the people of the region will ever be able to attain the capability to handle this by themselves. And if massive programmes are set going in the region, he fears that the minority in regional identity may be erased.  

1.6 Regionalism in Indian Politics

The north-south anti-apathy and the mainland-northeast differentiation apart, India has been witnessing one regional movement after another. The Assam movement, the Telanagana movement in Andhra Pradesh, the agitations of Vidharba region in Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena movement, Chhattisgarh regional movement in Madhya Pradesh, the eight hill districts of Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Ladakh regions in Kashmir, Jharkhand movement in Bihar, the conflict between the people of old Mysore and the integral part of Karnataka, the high land vs. plains conflict in Orissa, the Tamil movement, the Punjab movement, and the various regional movements of the hill people of Northeast India, only show that no part of the country has been free from the direct or indirect effects of regionalism.

---

1.7 Regionalism and the National Unity-the Indian context

Regional movements in India vary from region to region in nature, roots, support and potency. On account of the variations, there can be no single and full proof method which will be effective in dealing with all types of regional movements. While fanatic communal and secessionist movements may have to be dealt with firmly, the genuine demands of the moderate people of various regions may be responded accommodatively. The policy-decisions in relation to regional problems can be of any approach: demographic, developmental, militaristic and political. Economic approach handled with planning skill can be an effective means of pacifying and meeting the demands of regional forces. But, economic measure alone is not a panacea for all the problems of regionalism, as Radhey Mohan observes, “Today we often take it for granted that economic changes like industrialization will break down cultural and social barriers, eliminate cultural tensions and weld a single culture out of diverse elements. If this were true, there should have been no separatist Scotish movement in Britain”. Not only that, the economic process, which is expected to have a magic effect on the regionalist orientation of the people, can turn out to be the cause of complex problems and tensions in relation to cultural integration and balance.

There are two polarized views on the question whether regional movements are a threat to national integrity and both views have supporters among scholars of the Indian situation.

To one group, any form of regionalism is a danger to national integrity and it is to be condemned outright. This group of thinkers see more of the ‘centrifugal impact of regionalism’ in the context of national unity. They seem to be agreed with Arun K. Chatterjee who observed, thus,

---

“These trends and centrifugal forces of regionalism are potential dangers of national integration, and if they remain unchecked, may strike at the roots of achieving a workable democracy. It is certainly disheartening to note that as yet, perhaps our sense of nationalism is only skin deep. This is all the more significant because in a democratic set up like India’s national stability and progress is determined by the unity of the people transcending regional consideration”72.

According to this view, therefore, regionalism is a threat to national unity and in order to check the regional forces there should be a strong centre. The supporters of this view would favour the unitary model of national unity than the pluralistic model.

Others do not believe that national unity can be achieved on the unitary model in the midst of “myriad streams of cultures, about 16 major languages, 2000 dialects, a dozen ethnic groups, 7 religious communities….that inhibit 58 socio-cultural sub-regions”73. They rather perceive India as a plural society and would expect national unity on a pluralistic model. R.N.Mishra described his work on Orissa state politics as based on hypothesis that “a plural integration model is more suited to our experience rejecting the American model of unitary integration”74. The plurality of Indian society is stressed by Prof. Rasheeduddin Khan in the following words:

“To perceive India as a country is a misnomer, strictly in terms of geography, ethnic identity, linguistic homogeneity, even in terms of belief-pattern, as a matter of fact on every term, except that of territorial sovereignty. That India is a country in terms of territorial sovereignty is very well known...Beyond political identity, there is no other identity, single and universal. This is

nothing to be afraid of or feel anxious about...We are plural in the multiple sense of the word. We are the most authentic plural society the world has ever known. This is our strength. Nothing is more repugnant to the culture of India than the attempt to perceive us as a small entity. We are very large.  

1.8 Regionalism and Movement in Orissa

Regional differences in a social system have in turn their impact on the political system. Orissa’s political system has almost been continuously affected by deep regional differences. The growth and development of regional political parties in Orissa were the functions of regional cleavages. Regional feelings and regional parties were a direct reaction of the long, deep-rooted socio-economic problems. Regional parties often develop as the institutional framework for redressing the regional grievances and imbalances in a particular society.

The geographical and historical differences generated long and deep-rooted conflict between the two distinct regions that came into operation after the merger of the native state. The coastal plains were under the British control and the twenty four native states with variations in size, population and resources were under peculiar bunch of rulers. There was visible under-development in some of the areas of the western uplands. It is the feudal structure of the greater part of the traditional Orissan society which provided a fertile soil for the germination of the regional sentiments in the state. The presence of a number of ex-ruling families in the area and their active participation in democratic politics after 1947 helped the regional sentiments to take a definite shape. Seven districts were created after the merger of native states with minor modifications in the district map for administrative convenience. Those seven districts were (Bolangir, Kalahandi, Phulbani, Sundergarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Dhenkanal). The western upland is

---

having thickly populated tribal population. They have also a lower rate of literacy. This changes the district average and there is less supply of educated persons to the state level. The rural-urban, general-tribal, low literacy help in the widening of the region imbalance since the educated are politically conscious they take away the benefits available for all in the state. Excluding this demographic peculiarities which had given evidence of low literacy, high percentage of tribal concentration and low urbanization the western uplands had also dissimilar economic profile. There was visible distinction between both the regions which persisted for a longer period. The regional imbalance had political dimension also. The Hirakud Dam and Rourkela Steel plant were welcome steps but it had social dimensions due to displacement of massive population from the dam site and plant site. Though party based projection of issue in the western uplands died out yet students and young elements have periodically tried to exploit the regional sentiment available in the region. The formation of *Paschim Orissa Gana Sammukshya* (Western Orissa Popular Front) in 1973 was a major attempt in this direction. Mobilization of young and students to press for regional demands is thus a process of articulating regionalism of the western upland region. All non-Congress opposition parties supported the *Gana Sammukshya*. They were all very critical of the potential leadership of coastal plain in the state which was responsible for the uneven economic growth.

In the recent past legislators of the western uplands and particularly the tribal legislators in the state could organize themselves against the unhelpful attitude of the political leadership. But the grouping and regroupings of this sort had political designs and they emerged as pressure groups. The regional variations in the state are continuing but the political exploitation of this variation is missing.

It is to be remembered that in view of the growth of regional bases among the contending political parties, a complex and confusing political pattern of party system characterized the politics in Orissa. Coalition became recurring phenomenon.

Regionalism and its continuing menace can be understood from different patterns of politics being played in Indian states. However, this phenomenon can be analysed from a
different angle in Orissan politics. Economic backwardness does not seem to have generated radicalism in Indian politics. It is obvious from the little success the left parties achieved in the former princely states and in the tribal areas of the state. The national parties can draw the support of the masses only when they capitalize on the regional grievances. These are very true. But the most important point is that backward regions can get themselves politically organized more readily than the backward classes. It is not class conflict but an inter-regional cleavage that characterizes the politics in Orissa\textsuperscript{78}.