Abstract

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                          A Historical Perspective.
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In the Thesis entitled, **Punjab Politics (1966-1984): A Historical Perspective**, an attempt has been made to study the approach of the Central Government towards Punjab by dividing it into two phases- Nehru Phase, in which Jawahar Lal Nehru was the dominant leader and Post-Nehru Phase, in which Indira Gandhi was the main leader. A major difference in the approach of the Central Government has emerged wherein Prime Minister Nehru adopted an arbitrating and mediating roles and went for pluralistic solutions wherever possible. On the other hand, Indira Gandhi at the helm of affairs tried to centralize the administration and adopted more directly interventionist role in the regional conflicts between opposed ethnic, communal and caste groups.

The decade of 1960s and 70s saw a welcome change in the political set-up wherein the national party, the Indian National Congress lost its firm grip over the electoral politics, yielding space to the Regional parties based upon the system of alliances and coalitions. This period saw the worst type of defection,
counter-defections and the unmitigated misuse of President’s rule under Article 356.

Despite the political instability, the decade of 1960s and 70s was marked by a period of economic stability and progress. The phenomenon which saw increased production of wheat and rice grains, with the application of pesticides, herbicides, weedicides, and augmenting water resources was broadly termed as Green Revolution.

The Reorganization of Punjab in 1966 created problems than it could have satisfactorily solved. On the top of it the political and administrative experience of the non-congress State government which in the period from 1967 to 1972 saw four chief ministers in as many years, mid-term election and twice imposition of President’s rule further aggravated the situation. This ultimately led to the political slugfest between the Centre and the State of Punjab which ended up in bitter struggle and violence. The problems with the States will continue to simmer until the issues of Centre-State relations, Political Autonomy, Financial Autonomy, a true Federal Structure, Devolution of powers to the States, Plurality in the society are not satisfactorily addressed. The example of Punjab demonstrate that India can no longer be run on unitary basis and that the federal system must be transformed to give greater autonomy to the States.