Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

1. Re-statement of the Problem

Ruled by the feudal lords, Rajas and Ranas, for centuries, Himachal Pradesh was brought into the main stream of the Indian democracy in the year 1948. With the adoption of a democratic constitution on January 26, 1950, and the introduction of responsible government on March 1, 1952, Himachal Pradesh took, in her political life, a leap of more than one-and-a-quarter century. This sudden leap from the so-called serfdom to a democratic set-up has created a hiatus between the 'structure' of politics and the 'style' of politics. Whereas the structure has become modern and competitive, the style remains traditional and personalised. This has given rise to what

1. After the British-Nepalese War of 1814-15, the erstwhile states of Himachal Pradesh were brought under the British suzerainty, which insulated them from the new ideas and movements current in British part of India.
Prof. Eisenstadt calls 'split level modernization', which manifests itself in an ambivalent attitude of the people. Casteism, for example, is condemned as anti-democratic and yet appeals are made by politicians to arouse caste feelings to get the support of the voters. Casteism is criticised as an outmoded social value and yet primordial bonds (of caste, community, family and locality) govern the distribution of patronage. Concern is shown for 'moral' politics - a manifestation of unique aspects of Indian society and culture - and yet political aims are tried to be achieved through the 'immoral' mechanism of selfish interests. This 'split-personality' phenomenon is reflected in democratic institutions and processes. The formal democratic institutions instead of being used as weapons to fight 'traditional', 'particularistic' and 'ascriptive' values and loyalties are being used

as instruments of these very traditional institutions. The democratic processes of representative institutions instead of encouraging a sound political system are in fact generating factions. This phenomenon, according to the author, is a symptom of inherent contradictions between the new political order and the existing social framework. The result is the emergence of a completely new political system which may be described as 'transitional' or 'prismatic' in Ries's terminology.

The preceding chapters provide data and analysis relating to six different facets of political development in Himachal Pradesh. Chapter I, for instance, describes the historical and environmental setting in which the 'modern' political system was introduced in Himachal Pradesh. Chapter II deals with the pattern of political growth whereas Chapters III, IV, V and VI provide insights into the working of parliamentary institutions, viz., political parties, legislature, council of ministers and administration, in Himachal Pradesh. Major focus of this research is to trace the political development in the Pradesh during the period 1948-1956 (though the analysis has been brought up to date);
to analyse democratic processes and institutions in a caste-ridden society; and to study the behavioural patterns of the political leaders, the voters and the civil servants in a developing society. The purpose of this chapter is not to recapitulate or reformulate the findings but to analyse the political system as a whole in the context of its environmental setting and the institutional framework.

2. The Environmental Setting

Himachal Pradesh, as a political community, was cut off from the main stream of the Indian national life after the British-Nepalese War of 1814-1815. The hill chiefs of this region were brought under the British suzerainty and placed with respect to each other as nearly as possible in the position they had occupied before their subjection. They were granted Sunnuds (or Deeds of Allegiance) which conferred on them and their heirs in perpetuity the hereditary

1. See Chapter I, p.31.
domains of their states along with certain status privileges (His Highness, On Salute, and all that) as a price for strict obedience, loyalty and attachment to the British Government.¹ The conferring of honours and property privileges on the feudal lords, Rajas and Janas, not only incapacitated many of them from any tendency to revolt against the colonial power but also created a band of intermediaries, who functioned as 'brokers' and 'communicators' between two culturally heterogeneous groups (the colonial rulers and the masses of the Indian people). In the absence of secondary organisations, interests were articulated on a personal rather than organisational or structural level. The ruler was the interest articulator, interest aggregator and the rule-maker. The process of political recruitment was essentially 'particularistic' (based on families, bureaucratic cliques, factions and informal groups) while that of political socialisation, latent (diffuse and ascriptive). In such a society, the

¹ Other stipulations of the Sunnuds are given in Chapter I, pp. 32-33.
rate of political recruitment was slow; the degree of social mobilization, limited; the scope for political participation, insignificant; and the horizon of political expectations, narrow. Political leadership remained with the feudal lord, the Raja or Rana. The social and political influence consequently flowed from top to bottom without any reciprocity. The behavioural pattern smacked of obsequiousness towards the superiors and superciliousness towards the inferiors. This remained, more or less, the position until the mid-thirties of the present century when the Praja Mandal activities - mostly guided by Congress leaders from the British Indian provinces - began to cause slight stirrings in the minds of the educated people, whose number was infinitesimal.

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1. See Chapter II, pp.51-52.
However, the sudden exit of the Britishers from India (to the mind of an average Himachali, it was sudden) and the partition of the country on communal lines brought about an intense national feeling into the minds of the people. This sudden awakening of the people and the removal of the patronising hand of the British Government compelled the Princes of the Simla Hill States, Rajas and Ranas, to accede to the Dominion of India before August 15, 1947, on three subjects, namely, defence, foreign affairs and communications, and ultimately to cede (to the Dominion Government) full and exclusive authority, jurisdiction and power for and in relation to the governance of their states. 1 With

1. For details, see Chapter II, pp. 57-72.
their unconditional and absolute cession of jurisdiction and authority, the territories of the twenty-one Simla Hill States were integrated on April 15, 1948, into a single centrally-administered unit, known as Himachal Pradesh.¹ This integration not only brought the Pradesh into an organic relationship with the Dominion Government but also brought the Himachal society, all of a sudden, into the main stream of the Indian democracy. With the adoption of a completely modern democratic Constitution on the British parliamentary model in January 1950 and the grant of Responsible Government in 1952, Himachal Pradesh took, in her political life, a leap of more than one-and-a-quarter century, in a period of four years. Figuratively speaking, this was a situation like that of a villager from a tribal area in Central India negotiating his way to the Twin-towers of New York through the Times-Square in Manhattan.

3. The Institutional Framework

The sudden outburst from a traditional feudal order to a modern democratic set-up, with no previous experience, has led to a rather slipshod political development in Himachal Pradesh. The pattern of political growth conforms neither to the British model (followed in respect of the British Indian Provinces) nor to the American model (followed in regard to the Union Territories). It is neither in conformity with the pattern of political development enunciated by the Government of India itself.

According to the Declaration¹ of the late Sardar Patel, the then Union Minister of States, Himachal Pradesh was to be developed in three stages. In the first stage, it was to be administered through a Chief Commissioner, assisted by an Advisory Council.

1. See Chapter II, p. 75.
consisting of three rulers and six popularly-elected members. In the second stage, it was to be made a Lieut.-Governor's province with a Legislative Assembly and a Council of Ministers, responsible to the legislature. In the third stage, Himachal Pradesh was to be granted constitution "similar to that of any other province" of the Union of India.

Himachal Pradesh passed through the first stage during 1948-1952 and the second stage, during 1952-1956. The third stage of granting Himachal Pradesh constitution "similar to that of any other province" of the Indian Union was never reached.

On the other hand, Himachal Pradesh suffered a setback in status whereby it became a centrally-administered territory on November 1, 1956, resulting in the withdrawal of the democratic set-up and the substitution of a Territorial Council with

circumscribed powers and functions in place of a legislature and a Council of Ministers. In deference to the persistent wishes of the people and their representatives, however, the Government of India yielded to the political pressure in the corridors of Parliament and the Central Secretariat and restored the democratic set-up (consisting of the popularly-elected legislature and the Council of Ministers, responsible to it), thus picking up the old thread of parliamentary democracy in Himachal Pradesh. This was done on July 1, 1963, and since then Himachal Pradesh has been a centrally-administered territory. Its present status is somewhat superior to that of the Provincial Government under the Government of India Act, 1919, but short that of a federated 'state' of the Federal Union.


2. As a Union Territory, Himachal Pradesh is subject to various limitations. (See Chapter V, pp.262-269).
4. The Behavioural Pattern

Notwithstanding the shortcomings inherent in the environmental setting and the institutional framework of Himachal Pradesh, democratic institutions and processes have not been without their impact. They have provided an outlet for competitiveness, drawn society and politics nearer, led to the emergence of a new leadership and have introduced radically new standards of behaviour. The grant of universal adult franchise and the holding of the four General Elections (as also bye-elections) in Himachal Pradesh, for instance, have given rise to unprecedented political awakening among the masses. Classes and communities hitherto ignored have been encouraged by political processes, no less than by economic policies, to cast off their 'pathetic contentment' and to look forward to better conditions of life. Such a realization
of the prospect of a better life among the hitherto 'docile' and 'amenable' classes may be slow but it is undoubtedly gaining momentum. The under-privileged and the under-dogs, who had been denied a share in public affairs, have begun to feel the power vested in them through the ballot box. Control of local bodies (Panchayats, Zila Parishads, Block Samitis, Municipal Committees, and so on) now looms large in their mind. It is increasingly being felt that those who control representatives to these bodies have access to things of material importance: licences, permits, contracts, development projects, etc. The growing political interest, the activation of local groups and the assimilation of new and hitherto left out sections of society into some form of political participation, along with the shift of governmental authority downwards within the framework of democratic decentralisation are some of the remarkable changes that are taking place almost simultaneously, thus giving rise to a descending pattern of politics.
In the changing pattern of politics, a significant development worth recording is the narrowing of the gap between society and politics through the simultaneous process of penetration of social institutions by political-governmental structures and involvement of traditional institutions and elites in the operation of modern democratic forms. The political leader, the elective representative and the minister now serve as a link between the people and the government, thereby drawing closer the political authority and social institutions. The political parties, trade unions and voluntary associations, which have had a mushroom growth\(^1\), now constitute a new structure through which various changes are sought to be brought about and sustained. In this structure, the emerging party system (one-party dominance with internal competition and constant criticism and latent threat from without) provides the political orientation. It is through the party system that new organisational networks interact and bring about a certain fusion and inter-penetration between the traditional social system and

\(^1\) See Chap. III, pp.110 and 131-33.
modern political institutions as well as between the competing values of tradition and modernity.

Structurally, such an interaction takes place through factions - with various linkages and channels of communication - which cut across existing institutions and solidarities. The process that sustains such a structural development is political competition and the struggle for power and material gain. Politicians need new bases of support while caste and community leaders are anxious to have a greater say in the allocation of jobs and funds. Consequently, far more attention is paid to influencing community leaders and 'key men' or the 'middle men', who form an important link between the people and the new political system.

Whether it is a question ofconvincing for votes for elections or for converging the individual or collective demands of the people to the government or administration, the 'middle men' are indispensable. In fact, in the case of national and state elections, certain influential persons have grown into powerful 'vote-banks' who can deliver a big lot of rural or caste votes at their bidding to their 'favourite sons'. Thus, the profession of old-time brokerage continues, though it is now adorned with a political plumage.
With the narrowing of the gap between society and politics, the leadership has undergone a radical change consistent with the changing behavioural pattern of the society. The pattern of emerging leadership reflects a transition from individual to collective, from hereditary to democratic and from ascriptive to functional type of leadership. The traditional leaders, the Rajas and Ranas, (the one time mighty colossus) have now become somewhat depoliticized. Their supremacy, though still retaining its last remnants here and there, is gradually waning. Many of them have willy-nilly adjusted themselves to the emerging patterns while others are engaging themselves in a profitable participation in the opportunities created by a developing economy. As forces of democratization are striking deeper roots, new claimants for power are emerging at every level. Competition between the caste groups has thus acquired a new dimension with
the rising tide of political aspirations. The new leaders are taking political parties into the villages and in the process turning them into instruments of their own power at the local level. What is important to note is that the neo-politician - unlike the old patriot or the Praja Mandal worker - has become more pragmatic in outlook and exploitative in relationship. This is the new political leader at the grass-roots of democracy. This man has no commitment to any political ideology. Nor does he owe loyalty to any political party. In fact, like his clientele, he does not understand much of the jargon of modern politics. He often changes his loyalty to one political party or the other according to the turn of the tide. But above him, there is, at the rational level, a real politician who does not rely upon his social 'status' but solely upon his political 'skill' through which he manipulates the local vote-brokers. He uses the party machine as an instrument for promoting his own interests or those of his caste or community. As a
Member of the Legislative Assembly, he keeps a permanent liaison with the administrative heads, both at the Headquarters and the districts, to have little favours done to his constituents and supporters, friends and relatives. Consequently, he is stuck up in the maze of local parochial politics. Thus, whatever popular politics there is in the state, it operates at the administrative rather than the policy-making level.

No wonder, therefore, the political vision of an average Member of the Legislative Assembly, as already noted, is parochial and regional. The State Legislature is consequently more a federation of regional and local interest brokers rather than an Assembly of the state representatives.

This being the character of the representatives in the Legislative Assembly, the quest for power, ungoverned by rules of legitimacy, has obviously become the master passion or the chief motivating force of their political career. Such a behavioural outlook has created a vicious circle of power hungry

politicians, who, for the gratification of their over-vaulting ambitions, become unscrupulous. It determines their behaviour in office and out of office. As long as association with the political leader or a group continues to be profitable, support also continues to come forth. With the setting in of diminishing return in the profit, however, political loyalty also decreases and gradually comes to an end. Political loyalty has thus become a commodity to be exchanged for political 'spoils' and position. Intra-party factionalism is the obvious aftermath. It expresses itself in fierce competition between the various warring groups, which endeavour to unseat each other from positions of power. Rival groups, as already noted, adopt threatening postures and even go to the extent of flirting with their opponents in a bid to capture controlling positions.

Group rivalries in the political hierarchy inevitably percolates into the lowest rung of the administrative ladder. The internecine wrangles of the ruling elite lead to factions among the civil servants, who are naturally divided in their loyalties to one ruling group or the other. In a system of mixed polity where politicians operate more at the administrative rather than policy-formulating level, the civil servants find themselves in a sort of political role – that is, they get oriented more towards the petty politics of the state and its political actors than to administration as such. And as the administration is involved in the distribution of scarce resources and agricultural and industrial inputs as well as in the grant of licences and permits for innumerable types of activities, the civil servants wield powers which may be exercised either for the good of the community as a whole or for sectional or
individual interests. Leaving apart the officers at the top of the administrative hierarchy (i.e., those who are either drawn on deputation from other states or are inducted from above, the Central Services), the civil servants at the subordinate level are subject to numerous pressures (political and others), which they find rather difficult to resist, partly because of their local affiliations and partly because of their service interests. The result is that they accommodate their own views, especially in controversial matters, to those of their superiors who, in turn, accommodate matters (until some indication is available of how the higher-ups (i.e., the ministers, the Lieut.-Governor, the Central Government, as the case may be) would like a particular case to be dealt with. No wonder, therefore, if the administration is charged that the politically powerful persons or places get the maximum benefit (by way of funds and services) while the rest, starve for the bare minimum.

1. Until recently, Himachal Pradesh did not have its own cadres of I.A.S. and senior Provincial Services.

5. Problem of Legitimacy of Authority

The foregoing analysis brings the author to the conclusion that in spite of the secularising trends of modern Himachal Pradesh, the political system, as it exists today, has an amorphous character. Although the 'structure' of politics has become modern, competitive and institutionalised, the 'style' of politics remains traditional, personalised and consensual. In the absence of effective opposition parties or functionally specific interest groups, personalities dominate the political scene and the contextual exigencies govern their strategies. In this personalised order, the ideological commitment is weak; the image of public interest, inadequate; and the perception of larger identifications, low. There is unbridled quest for power which has given rise to intra-party wrangles, group rivalries and 'palace intrigues'. No wonder, politics has come to acquire a rather sour smell. It has become a
'system' of factional bargaining - a system which has weakened, if not frustrated, political authority. Not that the government lacks in physical power; nor even that it shys away from using or showing its physical strength. What is implied is that the political actors in the government lack the potency to exercise their authority fearlessly and unhesitatingly for the promotion of public good and the removal of those hindrances that stand in the way of progress and development. This has posed a problem of legitimacy of political authority in a developing society. How are we to meet this problem?

Contemporary political science has no definite answer because it is a product of the economically-developed and politically-mature societies of Western Europe where legitimization of political authority has never been a serious problem. Having achieved their political consolidation and national integration under the autocratic rule of the Reformation Monarchies during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the problem before political scientists in these countries was not how to strengthen and stabilise political authority but how to control it. Hence, political theories like the Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances, Limited or Constitutional Monarchy and so on. But for the developing societies of today, these theories are, at best, of academic interest only. What is more urgently required for the understanding of the politics of these societies is to identify those parameters in the political system that strengthen, stabilise and legitimise political authority.
Traditionally, the chief legitimizer of political authority has been "DHAK" of the government - an indigenous word whose closest, though not perfect, English equivalent would be 'prestige'. And prestige has, again traditionally speaking, sustained itself on "DHONS", which means awe. But with the dawn of independence, enforcement of a democratic Constitution, establishment of a democratic government on the British parliamentary model and the penetration of democratic values into the life of a large majority of the people, the awe of the 'Sceptre', to borrow the Shakespearean phrase, which used to create dread in the minds of the people has almost vanished or is fast vanishing. The increase in the frequency of strikes, 'gheraos' and 'bunds', as already noted, indicate that the fear of authority is on the decrease and that "DHONS" of the government is no longer a dependable means of enforcing authority. The unprecedented strike by the school teachers all over the Pradesh a few months back and its

1. Literally 'DHAK' would mean 'sway-over' but that does not convey the popular sense of the word.
2. See Chapter IV, pp. 198-199.
continuance - despite its having been declared illegal by the government - further illustrate the point.

The submission of the author, therefore, is that political authority in a developing society, to be stable and legitimate, must depend on its efficiency in performance - efficiency to be understood in its broad social connotation. In a modern democratic set-up, the political authority can no longer hold the support of its citizenry on mere "DHQNB". The people after long years of sullen, unquestioning compliance, have at last come into their own. Under the impetus of change, greatly quickened by democratic institutions and processes, no less than by economic programmes and policies, there has been a revolution of rising expectations. It is the fulfilment of these expectations, in the shortest period of time, that will determine the efficiency of political authority. But the question would arise: How to measure this efficiency? In certain sectors of

1. The teachers remained on a relay hunger strike for about three months (See Tribune, 17.9.68, p.2, Col.7); stay-in strike, for one week (ibid., 19.9.68, p.3, Col.4); and stay-out strike after it had been declared illegal (ibid., 30.9.68, p.1,Cols.1-3) for about a fortnight. (ibid., 14.10.68, p.6, Col. 6). The strike was resorted to for enhanced pay scales.
where quantitative increase is involved, there may be no difficulty. But the quantitative increase is not always a valid and reliable means of measuring the efficiency of an organisation. Moreover, in certain sectors of our social and political life - for instance, in improving the managerial and entrepreneurial capacities of our top administrators and the research capacities of our scientists and engineers, and so on - it is qualitative, and not quantitative, efficiency that is desired and acknowledged by the people. And it is mainly in these sectors of our political life that political authority founders on the precipice of elite's own self-interest. The elite uses public authority to enhance its own prestige, security and comfort, and this brings about administrative ineffectiveness, precarious entrepreneurship and timid scholarship which, in turn, inhibit the society's ability to make the optimum use of its resources. In these sectors, performance should be judged in terms of social efficiency; that is, in terms of effort or endeavour made in the accomplishment of goals, and not in terms of net achievements. However, analytic studies of contemporary political systems, if made in this perspective, will yield more realistic and useful data.