DEMAND FOR STATE AUTONOMY AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIAN FEDERAL SYSTEM

The demand for more autonomy is one of the most controversial issues of the Indian federalism, although federalism is an important feature of the constitutional structure of the Indian democracy. Every federal polity envisages division of powers between the union and the state governments. The scheme of distribution of powers in every federal system is very much influenced by the operation of socio-cultural, economic, political, and historical factors and as such there is no uniform pattern of federal system in the contemporary world. One can find different models of the federal systems both in the democratic and communist countries. The founding fathers of the Indian constitution created a very powerful centre due to many compelling reasons. Article 1 of the Indian constitution provides that India that is Bharat is a "union of states". The Indian constitution is federal in form. In fact, nowhere in the constitution the word 'federation' has been used. A "union" in essence is a federation, with a strong centre, a union has pronounced centripetal tendencies, and therefore exhibits propensity to centralize administration, governmental activities and political power. Even then a union does not become a unitary state. It remains federal, with a bias towards the centre. K.C. Wheare described India as "quasi federal", a unitary state with subsidiary federal features rather than a federal state with subsidiary unitary features". Sir Ivor Jennings described India as "a federation with a strong centralizing tendency". Norman D Palmer
argued, "the republic of India is a federation, although it has many distinctive features which seem to modify the essentially federal nature of the state.⁴

Federalism is an important feature of the constitutional structure of the Indian democracy. It is perhaps adopted on the Canadian model. There were specific and valid reasons for calling our polity as union of states, and not a federation. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had his own justification and explanation to offer. According to him the Indian federation was not the result of an agreement by the states to join in a federation and that the federation not being the result of an agreement, no state has the right to secede from it.⁵ The federation in India is a union because it is indestructible. The country is one integral whole... the drafting committee thought that it was better to make it clear at the outset rather than to leave it to speculation or to dispute. The explanation, coming as it does, from the chairman of the drafting committee, is significant and throws sufficient light on the nature of our polity and inter- governmental relations. It is relevant to any discussion on the relations between the centre and the states in our country, even after over three and half decades of constitutional experience. As if this was not sufficient, a law was enacted subsequently to make it more clear and specific that our federation is indestructible. Such an emphatic enactment came in the wake of the secessionist forces forged out by some political parties like the Dravida Munnetra Kazagam in Tamil Nadu, to set at rest the controversy regarding the constitutional position of the states in the Indian union.
The federal process elsewhere has been promoted by a desire on the part of the small independent states contiguously situated and forced by circumstances to form a larger political union to survive and develop in a fiercely competitive comity of nations as was evidenced by the formation of the American confederation to start with. It presupposes a willingness on the part of such states to give up a known part of their sovereignty with respect of agreed areas of activity. In India the process was reversed and it was the colonial government at the centre that was the focus for the formation of a federal polity. India was always a unitary state with provinces or presidencies as its units of administration and the entire executive power was vested in the office of the viceroy, and the legislative powers in the British parliament, the existence of central and provincial legislatures not withstanding. The government of India Act, 1935, which mooted the amalgamation or merger of princely states, conceived India to be a federation for the first time. Obviously, the federal arrangement under the 1935 Act, this act also envisaged provincial autonomy, which gave guarded freedom of action to the provinces. The idea of a strong centre and subordinate states was thus mooted and developed much before the constitution of 1950.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar stated in the Constituent Assembly, this dual polity under the proposed constitution will consist of the union at the centre and the states at the periphery, each endowed with sovereign powers to be exercised in the field assigned to them respectively by the constitution. But what we have today is not a dual polity in the American sense. Dr B.R. Ambedkar was aware of this and he made out a case for a particular type of federal system for India, which
would be free from the effects of a normal federal polity, rigidity and legality. He provided for a polity, which could be both unitary as well as federal according to the requirements of time and circumstances. In normal times, it is framed to work as a federal system. But in times of war, it is designed as to make it work as though it was a unitary system.... The president of India issuing a proclamation under Article 352 can transform our federal polity into a unitary state. Besides such an omnibus provision, there are also other provisions giving the parliament the power to legislate to exclusively state subjects even during normal times. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had hoped that it would be possible to achieve the required degree of unity through such an arrangement in the life of the newly born republic. He provided technical and circumstantial justification for removing the doubts in the minds of the members as to the nature of our constitution and polity. It is possible to hold that such an arrangement was also to a large extent shaped by the personal views and preferences of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar himself on the subject. He was not a votary of a federal system, for he was a believer in a strong central government, particularly to safeguard the interests of the minorities. It was also necessary in the country like India with centripetal and centrifugal tendencies. As he had observed elsewhere, the genius of Indians was to divide and not to unite. Parochialism, casteism, linguism and such fissiparous tendencies have persisted all along in the history of our people. He was of course, not opposed to a federal form of government. But he said I confess I have a partiality for a unitary form of government. I think India needs it but I also realize that a federal form of government is inevitable if there is to be provincial autonomy. He
therefore provided for a flexible federal polity, which drastically restricts the autonomy of the states in the Indian union. The constitution of 1950 has actually provided for an over centralized union with weak units with a view to vesting real responsibility at the centre. 

The political process in our country has further reinforced a constitutional structure of a quasi-federal nature, or a decentralized unitary state, ever since the launching of the constitution. The monolithic nature of the Indian National Congress to which power was transferred by the British, continued to be in power both at the centre and all the states for nearly two decades since independence. The Indian National Congress was deeply entrenched in power under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru till his demise in 1964 and continued to be so till the general elections of 1967. The 1967 ballot upset the apple cart for the first time as political parties other than the Indian National Congress came to power in as many as nine states and its majority was drastically reduced both at the centre and also in those states where the congress party managed to survive in power. Stresses and strains surfaced in the centre – state relations with the disappearance of the one party dominance of the congress. We notice for the first time ripples in the centre state relations becoming visible.

The constitution of India does not lay any emphasis on autonomy of states in any assumed role for fulfilling political ambitions of such groups, which can identify themselves within the states. Rather, it proceeds on the basis of single citizenship with same rights and obligations for people living any where on the Indian
Territory. Every citizen has the freedom of movement and of settlement in any part of the country. The freedom of occupation, trade, profession or business can take an individual to any part of the country with opportunities equal to those of the local people. Marvaris from Rajasthan and Punjabis from Punjab control business all over India while Rao, Reddy or Menons from south India man the administrative machinery in every state. The states, which constitute the federal units in India, have the same constitution for their political organization and it is laid down by the constitution. The powers of state legislatures and executives can be increased or decreased by the consent of the majority of states only, and such an amendment of the constitution has to be passed by the parliament with special majority in the first instance. In the exercise of their functions, the states are subject to union parliament and government in multifarious ways, it will not be an exaggeration to say that with the general economic planning and taxing state can opt for economic planning affecting states is primarily being done by the union government. State protectionism for its individuals and state industries is also next to impossible under the constitution. The union government is committed to bringing up India up to level of most advanced industrial countries of the world. This kind of perspective is highly averse to any kind of preferential claim by any state for its minerals, agricultural or industrial resources or capabilities. The state autonomy is very much eclipsed by the general industrial thrust for the country created by the union government.

The basic proposition of India’s functioning federal system is that, despite the wide array of powers with which the centre is armed
by the constitution, there has been an unmistakable and growing trend towards an assertion of autonomy on the part of the constituent units. Of course, the trend has not been an unmistakable and growing trend towards an assertion of autonomy on the part of the constituent units. While the trend has not been uniformly evident and there has been back and forth movement, the balance of power tilting now towards the centre and then towards the states. Quite often it has been camouflaged by one party dominance, which, for long, characterized the political process in India as also by the blurring of jurisdictional lines caused by economic planning. The imposition of internal emergency muted but did not eliminate the trend. The second proposition is that the growing vitality of the states implies no erosion of the authority of the centre or the unity and security of the nation. The Indian federal system has developed sophisticated formal and informal instrumentalities for moderating the stresses and a strain, which inevitably, arise in such a polity. What it does imply is the development of a relationship of collaborative partnership, which subsists on the basis of the simultaneous independence, and interdependence of the centre and the states. Finally, it is proposed to draw attention to some of the socio, political dynamics which lie at the root of this developing pattern of partnership as distinguished from one of domination and subservience and is bringing India's structural federalism into greater harmony with what, for want of a better term, may be described as her social federalism. It is, of course, not suggested that these are the only variables, which affect the working of federal relations in India.
The federalist idea in the constitution of India had some inherent strains in the matter of equality among the federal units. The first noticeable inequality is with regard to the special status granted by Article 370 to Kashmir by making reference to its instrument of accession. The exception in favour of Kashmir is, however, amply justified by the then existing state of national and international situation created by Pakistani aggressional situation created by Pakistani aggression. The paradox of the situation was that Kashmir had a predominantly Muslim population under the Hindu Ruler but with a non-Muslim population under the Hindu Ruler but with a non-Muslim league and pro-India popular ruling political party. In the interest of the unity of nation in the bargain the constituent assembly had to recognize greater latitude in the legislative powers to Kashmir as compared to other princely states, which had merged, with India.

Secondly, the constituent assembly had made settlements for other princely states, which had merged with the Union of India. In one way, by providing privy purses to the princes and by constitutionally recognizing personal immunities and privileges for them, healing touch was given to personal feelings of the former rulers. Some princes were also made Raja Pramukhs of part B states which were princely states grouped together, Maharajas of Mysore and Kashmir and Nawab of Hyderabad were made regular Raja Pramukhs of their former princely states, which singly had become part B states under the constitution. Some princely states, which had strategic location, were made part C states and became centrally administered areas.
The seventh constitution Amendment of 1956 abolished the class of part B states altogether and it redefined the territories of India as 'states and 'Union territories'. The legislative and administrative privileges of part B states significantly came to an end. The personal immunities and privileges of the former rulers and privy purses under Article 363 and 391 of the constitution were not affected by this amendment. This prevented the rulers from organizing any resistance against complete absorption of their old states into a common national pattern. Subsequently, by 26th amendment of the constitution the personal privileges of nawabs and maharajas were as well abolished. The constitution envisages similar or equal status for all states though Articles 370 and 371-a to 371-f have provided special provisions to deal with particular problems of the some states, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh and Sikkim. These provisions give meaningful contents to federal system keeping in view the unity of the nation by making some needed adjustments investor of the feelings or level of development of concerned people. However, these provisions do not disturb the inter se equality in the legislative field, which is basically and commonly laid down by the format of seventh schedule.

The second problem of Union State Relationship arises when the ruling political parties at the two levels are different. This situation requires demarcation of union and state politician's field of politics and a harmonious understanding of the constitution for better union state amity. The two sets of politicians should be able to avoid mutual attribution of incompetence, which now is being done at the cost of the people, or development of the nation or the unity of the nation as
particularly noticed with regard to the state of West Bengal. Since the 1985 elections of parliament and the state legislature, while Congress I rules at the union and majority of the states, Andhra Pradesh has Telugu Desam, Tamil Nadu has AIADMK, Karnataka has Janata Dal, West Bengal has CPI (M), Jammu and Kashmir has National Conference and Sikkim has Ganatantra Parishad, Assam has Assam Gana Parishad, Tripura has Communist party of India and Punjab has Akali Dal as ruling parties. It is desirable in the interests of unity of the nation that the Indian politics and the constitution should ensure that at all times the union government is fair to all states. In no circumstances the provisions of the constitution should be used to justify any action by the union when its steps are patently discriminatory among the states or seek to obtain popularity for union ruling party by ensuring the fields of politics, which should legitimately be left for the state politics. Although the constitution envisages a two-tier system of politics in India, parliament and the state legislatures are not in a condition of competition with one another but these are rather partners in the same game. The preamble and directive principles of the state policy and various constitutional and conventional limitations set the objectives of the game. In this process parliament has the function of taking care of the working of the constitution at all levels. Theoretically, the Council of States is meant to safeguard the interests of the states in parliament. The Council of States is a continuous body, which cannot be dissolved, like the House of People that represents the political will of the people. Comparatively even though the Council of the States has special powers under Article 250 of the constitution; it is more like the
House of Lords of British parliament in its function than the Senate of the USA Congress. In India, politically it is being treated as a duplicate of the House of People; therefore, it is unable to perform the constitutional role, which its name conveys. The election of its members and conduct of its proceedings reflects the achievements and the interests of the political parties rather, than protection and promotion of the interests of the states. As such, the Council of States is not a check on the government and parliament when there is any change of injustice to a state or discrimination between the states on the suspected grounds of party politics. The Council of the States can be evolved as a representative of states in parliament independent of politics.

Obviously, therefore in order to maintain harmony between federal system and interactional politics at the union and state level in order to maintain the integrity and unity of the nation, there is need to define the legitimate zone for national level and state level politics. This has not been attempted so far and neither the electorate nor the political parties understand the two zones. The national politics for elections to parliament has to project the political ideas, which coordinate the common to some or all states, and which can only be put into operation through state matters. Conversely, the regional or state level political parties like Telugu Desam, AIADMK, Akali Dal, etc., should resist the temptation of contesting elections to the House of the People but should concentrate on the elections to the Council of the States and give real role and character to the latter house of parliament. In the eighth parliament the regional parties like Telugu Desam or AIADMK have given considerable representation to
themselves in the House of People without that much of direct interest in national politics which their memorandum of association, so as to say, would have initially provided.\textsuperscript{10}

The process of separation of national politics from state politics is made difficult by the constitutional position created by the concurrent list of the seventh schedule of the constitution, which gives jurisdiction to parliament in matter, which operate locally, or in civil life of people. In addition, the task of social and economic uplift of the people item 20 of list 111, though heavy industrialization regulated and coordinated by five year plans laid down by the planning commission, has very much eclipsed the role of state politics and administration in the welfare of the people of the states. Actually, the resulting interference in state autonomy though the money power exercised by the union though Article 282 of the constitution should have been either made concrete by the amendment of the constitution in favour of the union or voluntarily curtailed so as not to take away initiatives from the state politics in the matter of the socio–economic development in the states.

**IMPACT OF STATE AUTONOMY ON INDIAN FEDERAL SYSTEM**

The union-state relations in Indian political system have both static and dynamic characteristics. Federalism as such is both a structure and a process. As a structure it indicates the static legal and constitutional relationship, powers and positions of both the sets of governments. as a process it includes operational interrelationship, interdependence and interaction between the union and states and among the states both at party and governmental levels, thus dynamic
according to changing environment. The interdependence of union and state government in Indian political system is responsible for dual trends towards centralization and decentralization—centralization in response to, for example, the exigencies of national planning and decentralization as a result of many factors including centre’s dependence upon the states for the administration of its programmes.

Although the union has its own area of power, the territories in which it functions are under the control of states, which in turn have their own areas of power independently of the union. To ensure that a state government by its actions does not interfere with the legislative and administrative policies of the union and thereby undermine the unity of the nation, certain powers of administrative control over the states have been given to the central government. Article 256 of the constitution of India lays down that it shall be the duty of the states so as to exercise its executive powers as to secure that due effect is given within the state to every act of parliament, which applies in that state. This is a statement of constitutional duty of every state. India is entitled to give directions to the state government regarding the duty, which is imposed upon Article 256. The term ‘state’ cannot be held to apply merely to a geographical entity or territory. A direction can only be given to a legal entity and not a geographical or territorial entity.11

Under the Indian Constitution there is a distribution of legislative powers between the Union and the States (Article 246) where as in the United States and Australia the powers of the federal legislature have been enumerated and in Canada there is a double enumeration of powers provincial and concurrent. In India, as in the
Act of 1935, there is a three-fold enumeration, namely union, state and concurrent with the residuary powers being given to union instead of the states, as in the United States and Australia. Article 249 says that if the Council of states (Rajya Sabha) declares by a resolution of two-third of its members present and voting that it is necessary or expedient in the national interest that parliament should have power to make laws relating to any matter enumerated in the state list, then the parliament would be competent to make such laws for the whole or any part of India.

Under Article 252, the union parliament has powers to legislate for two or more states provided their legislatures resolve that it is desirable for parliament to make laws with respect to any matter included in the state list. Article 253 enjoins that parliament has power to make any law for the whole or any part of the territory of India for implementing any treaty, agreement or convention with any other country or any decision made in any international conference or association. In other words, Article 253 empowers the parliament to legislate on state subjects if such legislation is necessary for implementing an international obligation.

Article 352 empowers the president to proclaim an emergency when the security of India or any part of its territories is threatened by war, external aggression or internal disturbances. Article 250 empowers the parliament to make laws for the whole or any part of the territory of India with respect to any of the matters enumerated in the state list during the pendency of the emergency. In other words, the union during emergency may withdraw all powers from the states and function as a unitary state.
Resolution of the disputes between two or more states is essential for reducing tensions in Union-State relations. Usually, an Inter-State Dispute increases the bargaining power of the centre vis-à-vis the concerned states and therefore it may be in the interest of the centre to keep these disputes alive. Both the central and the state governments are required to spend a great deal of energy on keeping these disputes within manageable boundaries, consequently affecting their effectiveness in the developmental goals. As the centre is empowered by the constitution to settle these disputes, the concerned states direct their demands and frustrations at the centre and convert these disputes into issues of the centre-state relations. In our country, there are two types of Inter-State Disputes, Inter-State Water Disputes and inter-state boundary disputes.

In a federation conflicts between the union and the states cannot be ruled out altogether. Effort should be made to avoid such conflicts. This is normally done by mutual discussions, consultations and negotiations at conferences of governors, Chief Ministers, officials of the central government and state governments, Planning Commissions, National Development Council, National Integration Council etc. In view of the changed political atmosphere the means of settling disputes through mutual discussions, consultations and negotiations may not prove useful. The establishment of an Inter-state council under Article 263 affords an alternative means of settling these disputes between the Union and the states; it should effect Indian federal system.
The supporters of decentralization of powers and autonomy for states argue that the preservation of national unity and the process of consolidating the forces of national integration presuppose the acceptance of the manifold diversities, present in the nation and the urgent need for realistic and logical attempts to handle these diversities at the local level, by harnessing local initiative and utilizing local talent. Any attempt to tackle these diversities from a central point of control would only serve to heighten the tensions in the system. Contrary to this those who advocate greater consolidation of the powers of the centre opine that providing an impetus to the forces of nationalism was critical to strengthening national integration. They are emphatic in their belief that any step in the direction of weakening the centre would only open the floodgates to eventual balkanization. A strong centre is the only panacea to stem the institutionalization of sub national loyalties. According to this viewpoint the centre is believed to protect national integration while other centre's of power would only encourage and abate the rise and growth of divisive forces. However, events both in India and in other parts of the world have shown that whereas decentralization aims at fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of the people in a more purposive and meaningful manner it is the process of centralization, which triggers off the process of disintegration.

In this background the decade of the eighties in particular witnessed a struggle to get the federal issue on the nations agenda. When the political challenge assumed new dimensions and tensions between the centre and the state grew in sharpness, it became necessary to case the situation somewhat. In this context, the
government of India announced on March 24, 1983 the appointment of a commission to examine and review the working of existing arrangement between the union and the states in regard to powers, functions and responsibilities in all spheres and recommend appropriate changes and measures. The commission came to be known as the Sarkaria Commission on Centre-state relations. This commission kept in view the social and economic developments that have taken place over the years as also the scheme and the framework of the constitution and the need for preserving the unity and integrity of the country.14

India's political system is under great pressure today regarding the centre-state relations, and there is a demand for rethinking about them from the states. A number of them have been not only asking for more autonomy but, today they have made their impact irrevocably felt at the centre by actively participating in the formation of a federal government at the centre comprising a coalition of national and state based parties. The Sarkaria Commission had observed in its report that a "strong single monolithic party continued to hold power both in the union as well as the states for a long time had unexpected adverse effect on the healthy growth of union-state relations. With a strong leadership being at the apex of the congress, the centre-state issues came to be resolved through party channels and the need for institutions which would have enable effective union-state dialogue and meaningful discussions in a spirit of compromise and co-operative partnership to arrive at solutions based on consensus, was not felt. For a country of India's size with diverse cultures and customs, only a federal system of government would be able to provide
a stable system. The framers of the Indian constitution had already recognized the inevitable need for a federal system. But the federal mechanism was not effectively operated until the fourth general Elections of 1967. Moreover, there is a large gap between the theoretical and practical aspects of centre-state relations in India.

The appointment of the Sarkaria Commission by Mrs. Indira Gandhi’s government was the resultant response to the oft-repeated demands of the non congress ruled states, more particularly Andhra Pradesh ruled by N.T.Rama Rao ‘Telugu Desam Government and Karnataka ruled by the Janata Party for the first time turned non-congress and demanded the restructuring of Centre-state relations. Infact, the demand for a review of centre-state relations had been constantly and consistently raised by the DMK government in Tamil Nadu. It tried to emphasize that there was a heavy in-built bias infavour of the centre in the constitution. In its 1971 election manifesto, the DMK stressed, “we are of the opinion that anyway in impairing of an India-strong only such powers should be entrusted to the central government as would enable it to function in those spheres necessary to ensure a strong India. The rest of the powers, it said, should be passed on to the states and in order to bring about this necessary change the constitution should be suitably reviewed and amended. Further the party declared in its election Manifesto that the party shall undertake the mission of gathering support for state autonomy on an all India basis. It was the articulated view of the party that state autonomy was essential for the governance of states since state government’s were closer to the people and only when they acquired it they would be able to serve the people in a manner
expected of them. Karunanidhi and other prominent leaders of the 
party toured many states in the north and campaigned vigorously for 
greater autonomy to the states. The chief minister of Jammu and 
Kashmir, Farooq Abdullah, said in January 1978, that the states 
must be given more powers if the federal character of the constitution 
was to be maintained. “All the states should be given the sort of status 
enjoyed by Jammu & Kashmir under Article 370”. The Chief 
Minister of Kerala, E.M.S. Namboodripad said the emergence of new 
political forces in the country expressly called for the recognition of 
the multilingual and multi-national character of India and the need to 
make necessary adjustments in the federal character of the 
constitution.

The demand for the restructuring of centre-state relations 
gained momentum when the Left-Front Government of West Bengal 
headed by Jyothi Basu, passed a resolution in the legislative assembly 
and presented a memorandum to the centre on centre-state relations 
in 1978. Later, the demand was taken to the National Development 
council by the Non-Janata ruled states and then Prime Minister; 
Morarji Desai rejected demand saying that the time was not ripe for 
such a review.

In the post 1980 period the opposition increasingly became 
regional in its orientation. It put forth the demand of state autonomy. 
Some prominent leaders including Farooq Abdullah, M.Karunanidhi, 
Surjit Singh Barnala, Ram Krishna Hegde, N.T.Rama Rao attended the 
conclaves arranged for discussion on autonomy at Vijayawada, Delhi 
and Srinagar. To articulate the demand of greater state autonomy, in
1987 called upon the people to save the country from disintegration by halting the dangerous drift due to the centralization of power and distortion of the constitution. It issued a consensus statement seeking a full review of centre-state relations. Checking the unitary overtones, which over shadow the federal features of the constitution and changed the centralized pattern of economic and financial administration. It added that to end the tensions and disputes between the centre and the states. It suggested that Article 356 which enables the president to dissolve the state government or assembly should be suitably amended. In case of a constitutional breakdown, it should be obligatory for the centre to hold elections with in six months.

Very recently, the present Man Mohan Singh government has constituted a new commission on centre-state relations on 29th April 2007 led by justice M.M. Munchi to discuss with a desirability of increasing the share of states in central tax, transfer of centrally sponsored schemes in the state subject to the states and alleviation of the problem of debt burden on the state in the terms of reference.

The demand for secession from the union is the most serious form of regionalism, which even poses a serious threat to the national unity. The Sikh community, following the lead of Master Tara Singh, had demanded, during the freedom struggle, an independent state, to be called khalistan, for itself. Immediately after independence, Tara Singh demanded a Sikh state consisting of the Gurgaon district of Punjab and Patiala and the East Punjab State ‘Union’ (PEPSU). On 2\textsuperscript{nd} November 1949 he demanded a “Sikh Province” in East Punjab,
declaring that the Hindus of East Punjab had become “narrow-minded communalists” and that the Sikhs could not hope to get a fair deal at their hands. During 1950 and early 1960’s, the Sikhs of Punjab carried on an agitation, often times violent, for a Punjabi Suba and eventually this demand was conceded by the centre on 1966. Having realized that secession from the Indian union would not be possible, the Akali Dal leadership started talking of decentralization of political power and the greater autonomy to the states. At a meeting held at Anandpur Sahib on 16 and 17, 1973, the Akali Dal adopted a resolution, generally known as Anandpur Sahib resolution, containing its demands. This resolution stated that certain areas which had been taken away from Punjab and had been intentionally kept apart should be immediately merged with Punjab under one administrative unit, and that in the new Punjab, the central intervention should be restricted to defence, foreign affairs, post and telegraphs and currency and railways.

A different version of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution was put forth by the Akali Dal (Talwandi group) at a world Sikh convention at Anandpur Sahib in 1981. Its resolution stated that an autonomous region in the north of India should be set up forthwith wherein the Sikh’s interests were constitutionally recognized as of primary and special importance, and that the Sikh autonomous region “may be conceded and declared as entitled to frame its own constitution and may enjoy all powers except foreign relations, Defence and general communications”.

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On April 1981, the Akali extremists have been taking a hard-line approach for establishing a New All Sikh Nation called Khalistan, a demand originally voiced by a former member of the Akali Dal, Jagjit Singh. This was taken up in various milder forms by officially recognized and influential bodies such as the Sikh Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC). The chief political organ, the Akali Dal, clearly split over the issue, with the extremist group headed by Jagdeve Singh Talwandi demanding a separate nation, and middle of the road Akali Dal leadership led by Sant Hari Chand Singh Longowal, president of the Akali Dal, bemoaning the "Pariah status of the Sikhs". This demand for a new such nation has already taken two lines. Firstly in order to curb unrest in Punjab, Mrs. Gandhi took action with the help of army, by sending troops into golden temple complex (the holy place of Sikhs). This action hurt the feelings of Sikhs and as such vengeance was taken by shooting Mrs. Gandhi to death. Subsequently, Shiromani Akali Dal Leader Mr. Longowal, was also shot dead because he was the party to the Memo signed both by prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and Mr. Harchand Singh on 24th July 1985, paving the way for stability and peace in the state of Punjab.

Regarding the Akali Dal demand relating to Centre-state relations the authorities in New Delhi set up, in June 1983, a commission under the Chairmanship of Justice Ranjit Singh Sarkaria to examine and review the working of existing arrangements between the union and states in regard to powers, and recommend such changes as might be appropriate. This should have satisfied the Akali as it did the other opposition which also had raised this issue, but the Akalis were adamant that the government should make specific
mention of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution while referring the matter to Sarkaria Commission.

In a similar strain another instance of demand for Secession is the DMK's demand for Dravida Nadu launching an agitation for the secession the erstwhile state of Madras from the Indian Union and formation of an independent sovereign state of Tamil Nadu. It is one of the political planks of the DMK to fight against the imposition of Hindi on non-Hindi speaking people. The battle against Hindi that began in 1938 has not yet ended. The DMK opposed Hindi not because of any hatred towards a particular language nor even due to its overwhelming love for the mother tongue viz., Tamil. Its opposition is based upon deeper and more fundamental principles. If Hindi, the mother tongue of certain North Indian States, was allowed to become the national language it would naturally result in the supremacy of those states over others. Such situations make the non-Hindi states in general and Tamil Nadu in particular to take subordinate place in the national politics. This is the real cause for which the DMK has been opposing the imposition of Hindi even today. The framers of the constitution of India decided to institutionalize Hindi as a language of administration much against the wishes of the non-Hindi speaking people. In 1965 the Anti-Hindi feeling reached its apogee when the DMK observed the Republic day as a day of mourning. The reaction of the government of Tamil Nadu, headed by M.Bakthavatchalam towards this agitation was one of the apathy and it characterized this movement as anti-national. But the DMK had not in any way relented in its right, even though repressive measures were adopted against it. The government was driven to the necessity of obtaining the services
of the army when the law and order situation deteriorated. The excited and frenzied rank and file of the DMK resorted to self-immolation in different parts of the state. Strangely the students of the colleges and high schools in Madras were in the vanguard of the movement. They came forward to give up even their lives. The slogan "Life to Tamil and body to the soil" reverberated throughout the length and breadth of the state of Tamil Nadu.

An important ideological change was the demand of Dravida Nadu as a sovereign independent state, separated from the Indian Union. Anna was a man of churchillian courage. It is not so easy to conquer the ideology of one's own party which was advocated for more than two decades. The national interest in him was strong enough to persuade his own followers to give up that ideology when the Indo-Chinese war of 1962 posed a threat to the territorial integrity of our country. In the words of Anna, "the party had realized the dangerous potentialities of secession at the time of the Chinese aggression and had come to the conclusion that the plea would be "suicidal" to the DMK in particular and the country in general.19 In a statement Anna explained that his party had to give up its demand or a separate Dravida Nadu since no party in our country could exist outside the ambit of the constitution of India. Instead, it has decided to function as parliamentary party with good reasons. Accordingly in June 1963 the central executive committee of the DMK amended the party constitution to drop its goal of independent Dravida Nadu. Anna declared, "even though we have given up our demand for a separate Dravida Nadu, the reasons which led to our demand still remain". 20
The government of Tamil Nadu headed by the former Chief Minister, M.Karunanidhi appointed Rajmnnar Committee to examine the centre-state relations and recommended on the future federal set-up in India. P.V.Rajamannar was chairman of this committee expressed the constitutional position of the centre and the states in these words. There is a theme of subordination of the states running right through the constitution. There is a large scope for the centre to intrude into state affairs and thus affect the autonomy of the states. On interstate water disputes the Rajmnnar Committee recommended that all disputes relating to inter-state rivers should be decided by the Supreme Court and satisfactory provisions should be made for implementing its decisions. Regarding the state territories the committee suggested that one of the essential points of the federal principle is that the central or the national government should not have the power to redraw the map of the country unilaterally by forming new states or by altering the boundaries of the existing states. The committee discussed three alternatives in this connection, one was to provide in the constitution for the consent of the states concerned like other federal constitution the second was to set up an independent judicial tribunal for deciding the issues and third was to ascertain the opinion of the people of the area concerned.

M.Karunanidhi made use of the Rajmnnar Committee recommendations to pressurize the centre to grant more powers to the states. The union government did not accept the recommendations of the committee. In a particular case, which may be stated here, the Tamil Nadu government tried to define state rights. The CPI and the Anna DMK in Tamil Nadu made specific charges against the chief
Minister, Karunanidhi and his ministry and requested the union government to appoint a commission of enquiry against the chief Minister and his ministry. In his letter to the prime minister enclosing his replies to specific charges made against his ministry, M.Karunanidhi argued that the state cabinet was responsible to the legislative assembly of the state. The former chief minister clarified that there is no provision in our constitution, which makes the state cabinet accountable to the union. And as such it would be subversive of the entire scheme of the constitution and the system of responsible government if a state cabinet is ought to be subjected to a commission of inquiry by the union. On the other hand, the union government was of the view that it was fully competent to set up a commission of inquiry to go into any matter of public importance pertaining to the central or any state government.

Tamil Nadu chief minister M.Karunanidhi, gave an ultimatum to the centre that unless it announced finally and firmly its decision to set up a steel plant at Salem, his government would refuse "to give its consent" to the fourth plan document. M.Karunanidhi said that plan scheme would not yield the desired benefit if powers of formulating them and their implementation were concentrated in the hands of the centre. He put his views more plainly by demanding the abolition of the concurrent list in the constitution and recast the constitution in the light of the changed situation where the same party was not in power at the centre and in the states. The centre state relations, which depend to a large extent, on the basis of political parties in power at the centre and in the states. The centre has an advantage so long as it is governed by the single largest party in the parliament but
as soon as the political complexion changes at the centre. There may be strong demand in favour of a new pattern of relations between the centre and states. The prime minister is the head of the government at the centre but his position will be affected if there is a coalition government at the centre. When a prime minister heads a coalition government he will have to work according to the mandate of a co-ordination committee established with the consent of all partners in the coalition. In case a co-ordination committee consists of the representatives of some regional parties, the coalition government will be forced to agree to the conditions put by one or the other regional party. Therefore, the growth and role of regional parties is relevant not only at the state level but also in the context of a national government at a certain stage.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir however had a special status amounting to autonomy in all areas except for the four issues of national concern in the original constitutional test. But Article 370 was gradually eroded under political exigencies. The pressures of communal forces in India, the chauvinism in Jammu and the global forces of the cold war combined to obscure the federal issue in the state. The result was that the issue of autonomy of states in general and of regions within them remained dormant for long. However, it could not remain in cold storage for long. As soon as other political parties, including those of regional orientation, came up to claim their share in political power in 1967, the issue came to forefront. Article
370 became a matter of concern for the state governments, especially outside "the cow-belt".\textsuperscript{21} The debate on autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir and of its constituent units should be seen in the light of these developments.

As far as one can see the case of more autonomy in Jammu and Kashmir state is a critical requirement for which there is no time to lose. After securing the state autonomy within Article 370 or under its modified version, the three regions, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh may have their respective spheres of activity defined in clear terms. It will not be politically helpful to India or to the people of the state to carve separate states or union territories out of all or some of them. The precarious balance of communities makes a development in that direction seriously hazardous for the state as well as for the country. It is wrought with serious risks of neighbourly and global intrusions. One cannot, however absolutely overlook the fact that there are sub-regions, like Rajouri-Poonch, Doda-Kishtwar and Kargil which must be adjusted in a scheme of more autonomy. Demands for their autonomy may not be on the immediate political agenda but the issue is bound to acquire urgency as soon a scheme of regional autonomy for the three units is implemented. In policy making, it is always prudent to anticipate developments and take steps to pre-empt well in time the adverse consequences that may fall out of them.

Autonomy is an essential feature in the process for enduring integration. In human relationship as well as in democratic theory, a free association holds out the prospects of its durability. When one looks back to the political scene of pre-partition days, the rejection of
Zonal formula of Simla proposals seems to be one blunder of the Indian National Congress which deprived our nationalism the last chance of avoiding the partition of the country and keeping India together as a subcontinent. It is also true that separatist tendencies and militant movements often emanate from undue opposition to legitimate demands for autonomy.

Article 370 of the constitution is no longer an exclusively Kashmiri demand. Some states, like Nagaland, have already acquired special status under Article 371A, while Article 371B (Assam) and Article 371C (Manipur) also accord special status. Sikkim too has a special status in the terms of the constitution (thirty-fifth Amendment) Act of 1974, by which it became a constituent state of India. Others, like Punjab and Tamil Nadu, are putting political pressures to obtain similar status. There is a provision of regional committees in Andhra Pradesh and development boards for Maharashtra and Gujarat.

A very general question can be raised at this stage: why should the union government not concentrate on four vital issues of national importance? The state governments deserve autonomy. Many arguments against it have been shown as unconvincing. It has already been seen that small states do not always prove to be economically non-viable. In many instances, creation of small states like Haryana and Punjab has facilitated economic progress than in.

Nevertheless, the logic of autonomy goes beyond states. Regional imbalance often creates impediments in the way of growth in some regions. But in a bid to secure balanced development, it is not always necessary to create states, particularly when some sort of
regional autonomy within it can achieve the purpose. If one accepts the principle of autonomy for a viable region, there seems to be no justification in procrastinating the same right to sub-regions. In a polyarchal system, therefore, more autonomy appears to be a judicious strategy for survival and integration.

The latest and very controversial report on state autonomy is that of Jammu and Kashmir government. The state government constituted a committee to examine the issue of state autonomy, the report was submitted to the assembly and from June 20, 2000 was thoroughly discussed in the assembly and was adopted without much alteration with a note that it should be sent to the union cabinet for its consideration. The union cabinet in its meeting held on July 4th, 2000 out rightly rejected the autonomy report without going into much deliberation. So in a way, autonomy committee report of Jammu and Kashmir government received the same treatment from the central government as it was done at the time of Rajamannar Committee appointed by Tamil Nadu government in 1971 on the autonomy subject, the cabinet remarked that the acceptance of it would set the clock back and reverse the national process of integration of the state with India.

In spite of the fact that the report has been rejected by the union government but political analysts cannot easily afford to ignore it. It is a detailed and serious effort on the subject. The central theme of the report is to restore pre-1953 position to the state of Jammu and Kashmir which was the basis of Delhi Agreement of July 24th 1952 between Sheikh Abdullah and Jawaharlal Nehru defined the relationship between the Union and Jammu and Kashmir.22
Some of its key provisions:


2. Fundamental Rights: these, as defined in the Indian constitution, could not be conferred on Jammu and Kashmir residents in their entirety.

3. Headship of the state: the head of the state, or Sadre-e-Riyasat, shall be the person recognized by the president on the recommendation of the state legislature.

4. Emergency powers: the centre would have full authority in relation to the defence of the state from external aggression. But in the case of internal disturbance such powers would only be applied with the concurrence of the state legislatures.

Thus we find that the autonomy committee report is a very comprehensive exercise on the subject of centre-state relations with a specific purpose to demand more autonomy within the constitution of India for the state.

The reorganization of the states has further brought to light the extent and scope of adjustment for the federal form of government. The system after all does not stand for multi-policy alone. It stands for multiplicity in unity. In order to keep the federation alive to the needs of the people there must be a wide scope for co-operation between the central and regional governments, in as much as it is one of the fundamental principles of the federal structure that the central and regional governments should be properly co-ordinate. With a view to
bringing about a far better co-ordination in a speedy and goal oriented execution of development projects the institution of Zonal Councils was created under the states reorganization act of 1956. It may, however, be mentioned that the provisions for Zonal Councils has not been incorporated in any constitutional enactment. Article 263 of the constitution refers to the powers of the president to establish an inter-state council in order to co-ordinate the relations between the states and the union and one or more of the states. Such of Zonal Councils, which are advisory in character and functions entirely on a co-operative basis. The Zonal scheme was specifically devised to avoid much of the legal formality, for a legal sanction might be too formal for a co-operative attitude among the states. The introduction of Zonal Councils in 1956 was an attempt to link the political aspirations realized through the formation of linguistic states with that of economic necessities and long-range planning. In terms of a pragmatic approach in democratic planning the creation of Zonal Council would necessitate the state leaders to have a broad view of the region and evolve the methods of co-operation or inter-state problems. Socio-economic integration of the states in a region covers a vast field of co-operation which also requires a proper treatment to the minorities and backward classes, proper health schemes, exploitation of natural resources and energy, and proper distribution of essential commodities are some important matters that concern the Zonal Councils was envisaged to combat forces of regionalism and provide a common forum among the neighbouring states to solve their interconnected problems by way of discussion and mutual understanding. However, the same spirit was not maintained in actual practice during
the last decade. The remorse at letting down so valuable as instrument into-disuse was strongly shared by the former president Mr. V.V. Giri when he deplored there being allowed to become practically dormant.

In 1972 meeting of the Southern Zonal Council was held at Hyderabad, which raised fresh hopes that this machinery would play a fruitful role in promoting regional co-operation among the states in mutual and national interest. Apart from the accord reached among the chief ministers of the Southern Zone in the matter of sharing the power supply, greater significance was attached to removing the harshness of linguistic regionalism. In order to strengthen the forces of secularism and combat communalism in the states a meeting of the Central Zonal Council was held. Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh decide to check the communal tendencies in their neighbouring areas. Eradication of infectious diseases and taking protective measures against the spread can chalk out health development programmes with the assistance of the central government. Technical co-operation among the states is vital in the matter of irrigation, power, exploitation of energy resources and health schemes. Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan agreed on the sharing of the Narmada water. Energy crisis is an important issue that would further necessitate the co-operation of the states and activation of the Zonal Councils; moreover in the field of economic planning, it is not possible to achieve the objective of development unless there is a proper distribution among the states on essential commodities. The agreement among the states on essential commodities at the Zonal level can help the system of distribution. To meet the challenge of
rising inflation and counter the increasing smuggling activities a meeting of the Southern Zonal Council was held at Trivandrum on 31st December 1974, which discussed the measures to be taken against smugglers along the seacoast in southern states.

The Secessionist Movements, like the earlier one in Mizoram, and the continuing ones in Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland and Assam, are looked upon as not only unwarranted but also illegitimate. While there may be strong and valid grounds for holding such a view, the focus of attention has to be on the reasons for germination and burgeoning of the secessionist ideas and possible constitutional and political solutions. Democratic federalism enjoins openness, dialogue, debate, discussion and even paradigm shifts. The hill districts of Assam have also displayed great regional feeling and demanded the formation of an independent Mizo state. They demanded a separate state of Mizoram outside the union of India and in order to press their demand they organized themselves in a political front known as the Mizo National Front (MNF). The union government, naturally, turned down this demand and sought to suppress the movement. The Mizo’s organized armed agitation and commenced guerilla warfare and took support from foreign powers like China.

In course of time, the Mizo leaders realized the futility of the agitational and violent approach and submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi expressing their dissatisfaction with the existing arrangements. A three-member delegation headed by (MNF) president chunga met the prime minister in January 1971 to impress upon her the genuiness of their demand. By this time, the
Mizo's had given up their demand for secession from the Indian union and instead demanded a referendum on the question of granting separate statehood to the Mizos. The union government keeping their aspirations in view decided to make Mizo hill area a union Territory that was inaugurated by the Prime Minister herself on 21st January 1972. It was named Mizoram. This arrangement however did not satisfy the Mizo's and as such they under the leadership of Laldenga continued their agitation to achieve their objective of a separate Mizo state outside the Indian union. However in July 1976, an agreement was signed between the central government and Laldenga, which decided to solve the Mizo's problems through non-violent means. But in March 1977 this agreement was violated by Laldenga by adopting violent means. With the agreement that the Rajiv Gandhi government has signed with Mizo National Front of Laldenga, farewell to arms by the outlawed Mizo National Army and an end to the total neglect of the aspirations of a highly literate people by the centre are expected. And as such Mizoram was elevated to the status of a state from the union territory in the Indian union.

Similarly, another tribe (Nagas of Assam) demanded for secession from the Indian union and agitated for an independent state. The Nagas formed the Naga National Council under Zapa Phizo to carry on an agitation for the grant of independent status. In February 1950, phizo held in plebiscite on the issue of Naga Independence and 99 percent of Nagas were said to be in favour of a sovereign independent state. Several attempts by the centre were made to find a solution to the Nagaland problem, but nothing concrete emerged. The rebels continued to be on warpath, although a vast
majority of the Nagas has, however, now come within the peace movement and have agreed and reconciled themselves to the idea that all efforts to create a separate independent state of Nagaland outside the Indian Union will be a futile attempt and of no avail.

The Jharkhand Movement may be traceable to its innocuous socio-educational origins in the establishment in 1912 of Unnati Samaj and growth of political roots in the emergence in 1938 of Adivasi Mahasabha. Its distinctive political aspiration crystallized a decade or so later in the goal of a Jharkhand state within the Indian Union. The agitation for the state continued ever since the movement glided meanderingly. It differs in several other respects form the Naga Movement. If the latter produced the dour and tenacious Anagami Zapo Phizo, the former boasts of the charismatic leader Jaipal Singh. But, unlike the unswerving phizo, in retrospect it appears that perhaps unwittingly Jaipal Singh compromised the cause.24 After Jaipal Singh, the Jharkhand leadership neither adequately inspired the people nor distinguished itself too highly except in skimpy patches. In consequence, the Movement spurted or languished over the decades growing violent at times and lingering listlessly at others. Nevertheless, it was bale to sustain the abiding morale and even loyalty of its cadres. Retaining its civil and constitutional character by and large it did not face the need to go underground. Sincere implementation of the recommendations of the Committee for Jharkhand Matters (COJM) for a council framework might have led to a degree of genuine autonomy a while earlier and saved some socio-political turmoil. That could also have spelt an early certitude of a stepping-stone for a Jharkhand state. Superficially in place, in reality
the council was bereft of substance. In consequence, the Jharkhand tract remained in a state of tension, breeding different societal ills. The Jharkhandis felt let down, caught in the maze of murky politics. Nagaland state was conceded quite early in the battle the focus in history of the unremitting Jharkhand struggle was uncertain way ward and zigzag. One cannot escape the feeling that though the Jharkhand demand, set within the constitutional premises, was not unreasonable, at times the movement leadership lacked the mettle and the fiber to clinch matters, especially on occasions when the goal appeared within an ace of realization. Secondly, that the region’s public weal and interest fell prey to political skull duggery. Nevertheless, since, by and large, the movement was people. Up borne, its fulfillment in 2000 sent waves of exhilaration and hope in the region.

The Jharkhand and the Bodoland Movements do not fall in the category of secessionist movements since the demands locate the proposed states within the existing constitutional precincts. At best, they may be regarded as restructures movements. The staunch protagonists of the nation-state may dub them as less malevolent then secessionist, though still malignant. Such votaries have to reset their sights. In India, a genuine over all federal structure has not only been in the making but is also an imperative of an intensely diverse, evolving polity that might have set out initially on a unitary constitutional path, but finds it incompatible with the evolutionary trends. Further, it needs to be appreciated that such demands do not question the legitimacy of the nation state. An internal rearrangement of a system may do no violence to the inherent fundamental federalist
structure. On the contrary, there is reason to repose belief in the view that the satisfaction generated on acceptance of a rational demand may strengthen the inner bonds of the polity.

To be sure, India will have to live with several such movements at different points of time in different parts of the country, creating every time new political and societal constellations. In fact, as of today, several demands for creation of new states are afloat. In a polity of India's kaleidoscopic variety and magnitude this should cause no loss of nerve. On the other hand, it may lead to spring origins of creativity for a secular, throbbing, dynamic federal India, these different movements has a serious impact on the integrity of the Indian union.

In order to understand this unique phenomenon of Indian politics, one has to probe into the history of centre-state relationship in India. Before 1967, the congress party barring in some isolated pockets like PEPSU in 1952 and Kerala in 1957, held complete sway over the entire country. Obviously centre-state relationship remained smooth owing to one party dominant system. Central control was exercised through central party organization but to some extent it was impeded by state level party organizations. In West Bengal, the state level leaders used the argument of leftist threat to maintain its independence from central control. This situation in West Bengal was truly unique on the one hand, it pleaded for a greater central assistance to curb the leftist menace thereby increasing its independence on the centre. On the other hand, it used the very same argument to remain independent of central domination. It took the plea of extenuation circumstances to remain independent to central
party discipline to deal firmly with local and state level problems, unfettered by central direction and control party cohesion and its ability to mobilize masses for political action to counteract leftist threat were the major sources of the state autonomy. Because of this threat the central leaders were willing to concede wider degree of latitude and independence to the state level leaders. So was the case of former congress government in Tamil Nadu and Punjab. Both used successfully the threat posed by the DMK and the Akali Dal to remain largely independent of central control. The bugbear of feudal revival was successfully used by the congress government of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Orissa, that of RSS obscurantism by the government of Madhya Pradesh and Telangana separatism by the government of Andhra Pradesh, to remain relatively independent of central domination. The situation after 1967 underwent a radical change. The political contour in several states has changed and as many as nine states, viz, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala threw off the yoke of congress party’s domination lasting over two decades. With that disappeared the unifying role of congress high command. A new era of multi-party rule was inaugurated in India at the state level, which considerably strained the centre-state relations and posed a big challenge to the federal exigencies of India. Even a stable state like DMK governed in Tamil Nadu, while remaining implacably opposed to the congress party within Tamil Nadu, began cultivating the central congress leaders for greater financial assistance. Nor were the Akali Dal in Punjab averse to cultivating this kind of relationship though in this endeavour their success was as short-lived as their government.
Their numerical inferiority denied the Alkali’s a decisive bargaining role. The congress split in 1969 gave further impetus to the trend of bargaining co-operativism between the centre and states. The DMK came closer to congress and not only remained independent of central assistance for drought relief as part of the bargain.

A fifth general election was held in 1972, for sixteen state assemblies and the legislature of two union territories was conducted. The country had just then in December 1971, fought a war with Pakistan over Bangladesh issue, and leaders of several opposition parties expressed the view that elections for the assemblies should be postponed for sometime in order to save the country from huge expenditure involved in that exercise. But professing to be a great constitutionalist and a democrat Mrs. Gandhi took the view that the election should be held according to schedule. The real reason why she took this stand appeared to be that due to victory over Pakistan her image in the country had gone high and she wanted to cash on it.

The new era in the centre-state relations began in 1977 when the emergency came to an end with the massive victory of the Janata party failed to have the same leading position in south India, and as such there were different political parties in power in various states. Sheikh Abdullah’s National conference came to power in Jammu and Kashmir, CPM and its leftist allies gained absolute majority in West Bengal and in two of the major southern states congress (I) achieved a clear majority, whereas in Tamil Nadu a regional party AIADMK came to power. The central leadership of the Janata party had to deal with states who might not agree with the policies of the ruling Janata party at the centre. Taking advantage of political situation in the country
the state government leaders from West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir raised the demand for autonomy of the states. Their belief was further strengthened by the election manifesto of Janata party, which had announced on the eve of parliamentary elections the twin objectives of decentralization of power in political as well as economic matters. The West Bengal government headed by Jyoti Basu asked for a national debate and a fresh review of the centre-state relations. A memorandum was submitted by the West Bengal government to the seventh Finance Commission in which it was stated that the changed political situation and the need for harmonious and rapid social and economic development called for a fundamental restructuring of the existing centre-state fiscal arrangement reducing particularly the centre's discretionary powers. The then prime minister, Morarji Desai made it clear in the parliament that it was not necessary at the present time to hold national debate on the centre-state relations, however if any chief minister desired to raise the matter again, he was free to do so, he said the centre-state relations, and said that the matter was covered by the administrative reforms commission, which studied the subject in depth and recommended that no constitutional amendment was necessary for ensuring proper and harmonious relations with the states. Provisions of the constitution were adequate for the purpose of meeting any situation or resolving any problem that might arise. The central government had agreed with the general approach recommended by the Administrative Reform Commission. The government therefore did not consider the present time appropriate for national debate on this issue.
Considering the political complexion in various states the discussion on centre-state relations will also continue in future. The regional parties, which are confined only to certain specific areas, will insist for more autonomy for the states. The CPM is an All India Party, but its main hold is in West Bengal. In view of its election commitments to the people for the development of the state the party finds limited resources to fulfill its commitments, other political parties and opposition groups in West Bengal have opposed the idea of autonomy of state on the ground that it poses a threat to parties which are in minority in the state, and a danger to the integrity of the country. Similarly, in Punjab the demand of autonomy of state by Akali Dal is opposed by the Janata party group in the state as the Janata group is in minority. The Janata party is a constituent of the coalition government in Punjab but there are differences between the Janata and the Akali Dal on the use and promotion of the national language-Hindi in the states. The minority groups in most of the states, whether determined on the basis of culture or political grouping are not in favour of the autonomy demand of the states, as the feeling among minorities runs on the line that a strong centre would be in a position to protect their interest.

Most important role in bringing about a realignment of power within the federal system is being played by the regional parties per se, such as the AIADMK, the DMK, the Akali Dal and the reviewed National Conference in Jammu & Kashmir. These parties are regional not only in terms of their electoral support base but also in terms of their political ambitions and policy perspectives. With no apparent
prospect of capturing power at the centre or except in extraordinary situations, of even playing a balancing role in the power structure at the national level, they are obliged to articulate and mobilize regionally based interest and to agitate local issues. Charges of discrimination by the centre against their respective regions are their most potent electoral gunpowder. It is only to be expected that the most vociferous demands for greater autonomy for the states are championed by regional parties whose raison is to act as vehicles for the self-expression of regional particularities. The regional parties are functional to the federal system is evident from the firmness of their electoral support base. This appears to be the only valid explanation of the fact that Tamil Nadu has become a stronghold first of the DMK, and now of the AIADMK, and that the Akali Dal has returned to power in Punjab as a result of the June 1977 election to the state legislative assembly apart from having won all the seats in March 1977 election to the Lok Sabha.

In 1977 we have perceived this trend in the political behaviour and style of ruling party in dealing with the opposition governments of the states. The possibilities of authoritarian behaviour and style would be less. The demand for decentralization and greater state autonomy would be more strongly vocalised, and the complaints of toppling the state opposition ministries would be heard intermittently. Infact our constitutional structure of All India Parties is unitary. If the centre is strong, with an undisputed, effective popular national leadership, everything relating to its party and governments of the state would be
decided at the central level. The process of rule making and rule application will be directed and controlled by the centre. In the reverse position, the strong, state-oriented, regional leaders would try to dominate the national politics.

The All India Parties do not show an agreed view on union-state relations. Some parties as erstwhile Jan Sangh, Communist and the Congress to certain extent are centralists. But when they are holding powers in the state, they will strongly demand for more state autonomy and decentralization, because of their particular political strategy, and regional support base, example CPI (M), erstwhile the Swantantra party is committed to an ideology of decentralization and socialist in their eagerness to balance the claims of national integrity and regional autonomy are reluctant to find any basis of conflicts of interest of the union and the states. Naturally, from them the politics of union-state confrontation has no major interest. The major bond of alliance is provided by the attraction of power. The central leaders of different constituent units of Janata Party want to have their CM in as many states as possible. It is an uneasy and uncomfortable compromise of diverse interests and ideologies. The sufficient awareness and intensity in union state relations have increased and due to regional based political parties in the states, the demand for state autonomy is vocally and manifestly articulated. The centre is involved in its intra party sectional conflicts and is not in a position either to fulfill all the demands or to act strictly.
The central leaders of the party are expressing different opinion with regard to their intra party conflicts and no policy matters. The legitimacy of their action is not based on rational, traditional or charismatic ground. In the absence of above element, the legitimacy of the central action is widely suspected and the political system is put to sever strains. When a leadership of party is criticizing its own party leaders and government cannot justify central action and satisfy its own central and state leader of different units, how can it create an environment of mutual good will, adjustment and cooperation with other opposition parties of the states? The central action in the state sphere should be based either on the totality of constitutional scheme or consent of the state authority concerned. Once the genuine complaints of the states could be removed and the legitimacy of the central actions is substantially ensured, the edge of regional discontent will soon be blunt and an atmosphere of mutual goodwill and trust arise. It will then become possible to make an extensive and fruitful use of the various devices of cooperative federalism and avoid any bitter union state controversy. But this could be possible only when the political party in the centre has not to bother for its own existence in the face of bitter intra-party conflicts and divided leadership.

Federalism is essentially a political culture, an outlook on national life. The question is whether in a land of India's continental dimensions of rich diversities, regional, linguistic and other profound
cultural traditions, does Indian nationalism require suppression of the diversities of whether the national well being will be fostered by encouraging and allowing the diversities to have full play within the national framework. Most states have been demanding more autonomy for a long time much before the demand of Kashmir became strident. As soon as Farooq Abdullah had a resolution passed in its favour by the Kashmir Assembly, Akalis in Punjab began to clamour for demand for separate states. Autonomy is not only a question of wider jurisdiction for self-rule but also in an important sense, a question of adequacy and dignity both among the political class and the people at large. Concerns relating to the path of development and its relation to politicization of ears in terms of a groups destiny cannot be ignored. Because the central contradiction of the history of Indian states seems to be between the logic of economic development and the logic of political identities. One worked through centralizing states and homogenizing market and the other its dark underside of constant process of exclusion, resentment and hostility to the undeserved privilege. Once spoke the language of integration and unity and the other negative language of localism and regional autonomy reflecting xenophobic homogeneous political communities.

To conclude to say that federal studies have not concerned themselves sufficiently with how the powers and functions theoretically assigned to state governments under the seventh schedule are operationally exercised below the state level. The artificial boundaries between federal studies limited to problems and issues of centre state relations and studies on state and local government need to be done away with in the interest of evolving an
integrated multi level approach to the federal polity. The centre state
relations paradigm extend their concerns to encompass the
possibilities and potential of multi-level federalism. If the first
responsibility of scholars is to explore all proposed answers of our
time, then carrying forward the idea of self-government is an urgent
priority. With the observation of Nikhil Chakaravarty 'if more
autonomy is granted right to all the states and the centre is diverted of
its overload of powers, retaining only the very minimum, why should
that lead to the disintegration of the country? Rather the very concept
of the union of India will come into its own. The durability of our
present state structure depends on the willing cooperation of all
regions. The centre is strengthened when the parts are willing
partners. There lies the dialectics of our polity today.'

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REFERENCES


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.


17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.


20. Ibid.


22. Ibid.


24. Ibid. p.178.


26. Ibid.


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