CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

In a federal constitutional context, state autonomy can be defined as freedom of the federating units to determine their actions on the constitutionally allotted spheres for which they are responsible to the electorate. Thus autonomy does not mean independence or sovereignty of the state. There was not much controversy over state autonomy during the Nehru era because the congress was in power not only at the centre but also at the states. The congress system as it is often called in academic discourse provided both the organizational pull and rallying symbols and metaphors that legitimized the national enterprise in the eyes of diverse population. The differences or conflicts between the centre and the states had always been resolved at the party level. Added to it was the fact that during the Nehru-Shastri period (1950-1966) the national and state governments were strong.

The framers of the constitution of India did not go in for a truly federal form of government. The constitution of India doesn't use the word federal. To borrow the phrase from the constitution, India that is Bharat, is a union of states was deliberately made to emphasize the centralized bias of an indestructible union. The architects were allegedly compelled to a strong centre model because of the pressure of immediate threats to the integrity of the nation.

The distribution of powers between the centre and the state in all fields indicates a strong bias in favour of the centre. A close look at the subjects included in the state list also tends to show that they are
not really of great significance. The concurrent list has as many as 47 items. Most of the elastic sources of income lie with the centre. In terms of Indian constitution the states are autonomous in the sense that there is a distribution of powers between the centre and the states, but the states have to work within the over all superiority and predominance of the centre, in case of conflict the states have to submit. This is the concept of state autonomy as outlined by in the constitution. This does not fit with the classical concept of autonomy of the constituent units in a federal system.¹

The Government of India Act of 1935 may be regarded as a constitution for a federal state in India, in which both British India and the Indian states would be joined. The federation provided in the government of India Act of 1935 was a most peculiar one. Since it was never really established it is impossible to say whether it would have been a workable arrangement. However, it served as a model for the federal state, which India established in the constitution of 1950. The Government of India Act of 1935 was designed to establish a highly centralized federation with a fair measure of provincial autonomy, always subject to the ultimate control of the paramount powers. Its federal features were never implemented owing to non-participation by the requisite number of states and also due to the sudden outbreak of the Second World War. Nevertheless, autonomous provinces were created under the Act as the first step towards the establishment of the federation subsequently and spheres of competence were precisely demarcated between the centre and the provinces.
In a federal setup the bias of two sets of governing authority the centre and state rests on the division of power, conflicts and tension between the two authorities are inevitable and universal. This problem is as old as the concept of federation. It has troubled almost all federations throughout the world at one time or the other and India is no exception.

The Indian political system is an organic whole. The states are the sub-system of this political system. The union state relationship is just like a relationship between the parts and the whole, which should not normally be competitive and antagonistic but co-operative and complimentary to each other. True, stresses and strains do arise from time to time; the degree and frequency may differ according to changing environment. The political system has to resolve them partly or fully depending on its style and capacity for the system, maintenance and tensions management. The interdependence of union and state governments in Indian political system is responsible for dual trends towards centralization and decentralization – centralisation 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.

This necessitates the setting up of co-operative federalism, wherein both the union and the state governments are compelled to come out of their sphere and to co-operate with each other in the task of promoting common welfare. There is undoubtedly an obvious interaction among the centralizing and decentralizing forces of Indian
political system. Planning, Political party and grants have been working in India as a powerful means of centralisation. At the same time, the growth of self consciousness and self assertiveness of the regional governments had manifested itself through linguistic, caste and communal fanaticism, regional prochialism, fanned chauvinism by vested interests that poses a strong challenge to centralisation.

If the centre is strong the states will not manifestly express their feelings of discontentment. The political style for articulation of their demands will be diffused, latent, covert and affective. Although, intermittently it can be heard from a remote corner example the demand for a new state in the political system, but it will not create a problem for the system –persistence and tension management. The authority at the centre with its power of legitimate physical coercion can easily cope with such stresses. Thus the boundary of union government (system) will expand in an invisible manner and similarly the boundaries of the states (sub systems) will diminish. The power of decision-making on major issues when government at the centre is strong will ordinarily rest with the central political system. Generally speaking, as such the authority of the central government is so extensive that the states have ordinarily to obey the orders and directions issued to them. The enormous authority of allocation of values, especially grants would be with the central political system and the capacity of political persuasion and bargaining of the states – sub system will be less in this situation. In such a situation the tendency for a strong centre can mostly be observed in the political behaviour and style of the Indian political system.
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.\(^3\) obviously centre-state relationship remained smooth owing to one party dominant system. Central control was exercised though 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. The situation in West Bengal was truly unique. On the one hand, it pleaded for a greater central assistance to curb the Leftist menace there by increasing its dependence on the centre. On the other hand, it used the very same argument to remain independent of central domination. It took the plea of extenuating circumstances to remain independent of 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 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 control as time passed on, several state leaders utilized the argument of state level oppositional threats to extract greater freedom from central party control. The bugbear of feudal revival was successfully used by the congress governments at
Rajasthan, Gujarat and Orissa, that of obscurantism by the government of Madhya Pradesh and Telangana separatism by the government of Andhra Pradesh, to remain relatively independent of central domination.

Till 1967, when the congress party was ruling both in the centre and almost all the states, the relation between the centre and states by and large was smooth and there were only a few tensions. If at all there were some differences between the centre and the states, they were resolved at the intra governmental level. However, this picture entirely changed in 1967 when non-congress parties formed the government at the states. They wanted greater independence of action. The states, which have been most vocal in criticizing the growing power of the centre, have put forward the demand for greater autonomy included West Bengal, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Jammu and Kashmir also joined this category. These states demanded an over all review of the Centre-state relations.

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 multiparty 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 Akalis in Punjab averse to cultivating this kind of relationship though in this endeavour their success was as short lived as their governments. Their numerical inferiority denied the Akalis a decisive bargaining role.

Ever since the independence many regional political parties have emerged in India and gained significant influence in some regions. The growth and dominance of regional and non congress parties is almost like a pincer movement. From the northwest, and the east, the northeast, the south and the southeast they seem to be advancing on a heartland, which is still the domain of the congress (I). These parties do not go against national integration. First of all, we have to consider why regional parties have emerged. The constitution provides for safeguarding small nationalities, it provides for the balanced social, cultural and economic development of different areas. But this has not been the policy of the central government so far and that is why we find a Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, DMK, AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir. They have come up because their problems have not been fulfilled. Regional parties take care of these problems and in the process help strengthen the country. Because of this reason more and more state based parties are coming up in various regions, not withstanding the congress, claim that the so-called regional parties will harm national unity and integrity.⁴
Regional parties are almost an inevitable development and have a definite influence and impact upon the politics of democratic states depending upon the right of dissent and diversity of life in their body politics. In western democracies minor parties may be said to condition and modify major parties somewhat as the habit of an organism determines its characteristics. The multiplication of minor parties cannot however, be prevented and they are bound to be an integral part of the political system because of the continuous struggle between various closed social groups, particularly in the multiparty system.

In 1969 the chief minister of Tamil Nadu appointed a Rajmannar Committee to study the centre-state relations. It recommended certain measures, which could ensure state autonomy. In 1977 the chief minister of West Bengal Jyoti Basu has demanded the restructuring of centre-state relations. The underlying intention being to lift the states from the present position of excessive dependence and subordination and to give them all large share of power and authority. In 1973 Akali Dal demanded for autonomy in Punjab through Anandpur Sahib Resolution. All these stressed in the imperative of a fresh look at the centre-state relations today as a result of the demand for state autonomy has become most controversial issue of the Indian federalism.

In Indian political system many of the political parties which claimed to have demolished one party identification of federal division of powers with sub national identities and many regional parties like Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu,
Akali Dal in Punjab. National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir play a very significant role in coalition government thus the regional parties have come to stay in Indian political system and their relevance in respective states.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The concept of state autonomy is considered as an important issue. The framers of the Indian constitution created strong central government with more powers to preserve and to strengthen the unity of the nation. Though the constitution of India is described as federal one, the balance is more tilted towards the centre. Thus there is a growing controversy over the centre state relations. In India, today the demand for a complete review of the question of state autonomy is getting acrimonious. A feeling has grown that federalism in India is becoming weak, that the centre has assumed the role of a supreme boss dictating everything to the states. This resulted in the problem of regional backwardness which was not tackled and the states were groaning that their further advancement has been frozen therefore, it is strongly convinced that a federal central government with decentralization of powers granting more autonomy to the states is the only solution to preserve the unity and integrity of the country. Thus with the emergence of regional political parties the demand for state autonomy has gained a momentum.

Thus the problem “The Dynamics of State Autonomy and Regional Politics: A Study in Southern States in India” is taken up with keen interest to make an enquiry as how far the southern state governments have been autonomous in their respective states. A
number of writers on the constitution of India have brought out their works on different aspects and working of the constitution including the problem of centre-state relations and the demand for state autonomy in the changed circumstances of the country. The present study is not superfluous. Its importance and need is all the more greater today in view of the recent developments.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dr. Chandra Pal's book entitled "State Autonomy in Indian Federation Emerging Trends"5 in 1984 deals with the various aspects of the problem of autonomy of the states and its emerging trends, the demand for greater autonomy to the states has been more and more under discussion. We should adopt competitive model of federalism, which has long since been discarded even in the land of its origin, or should we evolve robust indigenous solutions to our problem of autonomy of states. To change the metaphor, do we choose a "regression model" or a development model of our federal polity? These questions, which deserve sustained citizen interest and national debate, have been properly answered in this study. On the other hand there has been a demand for drastic constitutional changes in the direction of giving greater autonomy, especially more fiscal powers to the states. Indeed the Rajamannar Committee Report 1971, the Anandpur Sahib Resolution 1973, the West Bengal Memorandum 1977, the proceedings of the Regional demands. The present study is towards an informed and objective discussion of the working pattern of centre-state relations in India and an analysis of the dynamics, which shape this pattern. The power of the centre and the autonomy
of the states in Indian federal system reflect and articulate well-defined regional identities and the federal balance of power, at any given moment, as the product of the interaction of socio-cultural, economic, political and constitutional determinants, but there has been persistent lack of appreciation of the dynamics of functioning federal system in India. So this book is very useful in our study.

Richard Lindly's book entitled "Autonomy" in 1986, is a study with what is autonomy? Why autonomy is valuable? How important is autonomy compared to other values? How should autonomy be promoted in our society? What are the Definitions of autonomy, what is concept and conceptions of autonomy, what are the dimensions of autonomy, so this book on autonomy is very useful to our study.

K. R. Bombwall book entitled "National Power and State Autonomy" in 1977, deals with the growing volume of literature on Indian federalism indicates that studies in this field have travelled a long way from the predominance of legal-institutional analyses of federal relations which appeared during the fifties and early sixties. Such analyses tended to be based largely on textual interpretation of constitutional provisions and were only occasionally least possible with impressionistic assessment of the operational balance of power as between the centre and the states and much more rarely, advanced empirically based hypothesis. The centralization versus state autonomy debate has, generally speaking, clouded the important fact that there is and can be no fixed or undirectional working of federal relations in India, or for that matter, in any federal system. On the contrary, the operative federal balance of power in India has been a
variable and shifting one in every federal system, the power of the national government and the autonomy of regional governments have to be viewed in relative terms.

Sati Sahani's book "Centre- State Relations"10 in 1984, examines the centre state relations. The founding fathers of our constitution had envisaged a truly federal set up in which there would be clear division of the responsibilities between the states and the centre. In past few years many meetings seminars have been organized to solve the political problem around the country, this comes into sharp focus. Assumption of power in Tamil Nadu by DMK made them pay attention to it. The traumatic experience of the country and its people during the emergency in 1975-1977 was an added reason for fresh thinking. Situation in Assam and the Punjab created a new awareness about this matter. With the coming into power of the Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, Janata Party in Karnataka and re election of National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir in 1983, the problem assumed greater importance. Dr Farooq Abdullah, Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and President of the National Conference, invited a three-day conclave at Srinagar on 5th, 6th, 7th October 1983. Discussions covered the administrative, economic, legislative, political, financial, and constitutional aspects of the centre state relations. This book is made to add to the growing literature in the country on centre state relations.

Verinder Grover's book "Federal System, State Autonomy and Centre–State Relations in India"11 in 1990, is study with centre state relations in India, discusses the characteristics of the Indian federal system and warns that the centre, in its wisdom, should desist from
undue interference in the affairs of the states, which should be left alone. Federalism and state autonomy in India the paradigm and the paradox, goes into the states demand for autonomy and recommends a spirit of tolerance and goodwill on the part of the centre. The demand for autonomy is neither secession nor disruption of national sovereignty and far from dividing it will only unite the various units of federation. The centre–state relations and states that the story of basic issues and critical tensions areas in Indian federal system, which though more often than not, prior in existence to fourth General Elections, have got accentuated there after... co-operative federalism in India having lost its support base in the congress system is in search of a new anchorage amidst pressures of democracy, national development and regional growth and state autonomy.

Madhu Sudan Misra’s book “Politics of Regionalism in India with Special Reference to Punjab”¹² in 1988 throws light on multifarious dimensions, actions and interactions of the politics of regionalism in India. The work in general tries to comprehend regional awareness consciousness in its content and from in the Indian sub continent, with a special focus on Punjab. In 1956, after the reorganization of the states on linguistic basis politics of Punjab has however been traced since in its historical retrospect and prospect this book critically examines the pros and cons of communal and ethnic dimensions of Punjab politics, creation of Punjabi suba and the demand for Khalistan. And conclude that regionalism is the natural result of political development and modernization and in its healthy and positive form is conducive to national integration.
Babulal Fadia’s book “State Politics in India”\(^\text{13}\) is in two volumes. First volume reflects a particular theoretical perspective. It is not essentially theoretical, either in content or purpose. It is designed to provide a sense of the cultural and historical milieu in which political development takes place and to give a balanced treatment of structure and process of institutions and their behaviour in state politics. The study deals with Indian federal system with its historical background, its features, working of centre state relations. Trends and problems, the party system and political dynamics of Indian federalism, role of regional parties. Second volume deals with the panorama of state politics in India and analyses the political processes of ten of the twenty-five states within the Indian union. This book examines the varying state party systems, which have developed the nature of emerging pressure groups, political leadership, political defections and coalition as well as political agitations and movements in the states.

Akhtar Majeed’s book “Regionalism-Developmental Tensions in India”\(^\text{14}\) in 1984 explains the way people respond to regional variations in development, their fears of domination and their perceptions. The book is an account of how “sons of the soil” use political power to overcome such apprehensions of cultural and economic domination by others. This book deals with regionalism in Maharashtra, intra regionalism in Andhra Pradesh, communal dimension of regionalism in Indian federation, a study of trends in Akali Dal politics, sons of the soil agitations etc.
M G Khan's Ph.D thesis "Party System and Federal Process in India Since 1968" gives first hand information regarding the attitudes of different parties towards federalism. Working of Indian federalism in India and also study the regionalism and regional political parties and their role in Indian federal process.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study how regional political parties are emerging as powerful political forces in India.

2. Main objective of our study is to know how the demand for state autonomy made by the regional parties has influenced Indian federal system.

3. The objective is also to examine the relationship between regional political parties in the Indian federal system.

HYPOTHESIS:

1. Demand for state autonomy is the consequence of one-party dominant rule.

2. State autonomy has been the outcome of party politics.

METHODOLOGY:

In order to collect the relevant data for purpose of research work methodology is very important. Research simply means search for facts, answers to the questions and solutions to problems. Research becomes a systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical prepositions about the presumed relations among natural phenomena.
Hence in order to discover the exact truth the following methodology has been followed in the work viz., Historical, Documentary and descriptive methods.

1. **Historical Method**

   Historical method deals with the past records and other information sources with a view to reconstructing the origin and development of an institution or a movement or a system and discovering the trends in the past. It explains generalizations from the past trends in order to understand the present and to anticipate the future. It enables us to grasp our relationship with the past and to plan more intelligently for the future. The past contains the key to the present and the past and the present influences the future. This method helps us in visualizing the society as a dynamic organism and its structures and functions, which are steadily growing and undergoing change and transformation. This method consists eyewitness accounts narrated by an actual observer or participant in an event, oral testimony by elders, records and other documentary materials, so this method is very relevant to our study.

2. **Documentary Methods**

   In this method wherein the expressed thought embodied is systematically analysed and useful issues are taken into consideration. This method includes the primary sources, secondary sources and the tertiary sources. Accordingly, the data for the work has been gathered from primary sources viz, reports, resolutions, presidential addresses in the party meetings or sessions, party manifestoes, articles by eminent leaders of different political parties in
their party news papers, editorials, Constituent Assembly Debates and the statements of the leaders of parties in the legislatures.

3. Descriptive methods

Descriptive method makes a fact-finding investigation with adequate interpretation. It has focus on particular aspects or dimensions of the problems studied. It is designed to gather descriptive information and provides information for formulating more sophisticated studies. This method aims at identifying the various characteristics of a community or institution or problem under study, it can reveal potential relationship between variables, thus setting the stage for more elaborate investigation. This method highlights important methodological aspects of data collection and interpretation. Descriptive information obtained in a research may be useful for prediction about areas of social life outside the boundaries of the research. This method is valuable in providing facts needed for planning social action programmes.

PLAN OF THE STUDY:

The thesis is systematically divided into six chapters.

Chapter one deals with introductory part. It starts with statement of the problem, objectives of the study, review of the literature, hypothesis and methodology.

Chapter two examines the theoretical perspectives of state autonomy.

Chapter three tries to analyze the demand for greater autonomy made by the regional political parties in Indian federal system.
Chapter four studies a demand for state autonomy made by the Telugu Desam party.

Chapter five examines regional political parties and state autonomy- a study of DMK and AIADMK parties.

Sixth chapter deals with the Demand for state autonomy and its impact on Indian federal system.

The last chapter presents the conclusion, findings of the study and some suggestions for further research.
REFERENCES


