

REGIONAL ASPIRATIONS



Indian approach

- Indian nationalism sought to balance the principles of unity and diversity.
- This was a very different approach as European countries saw cultural diversity as a threat to the nation.
- Rather India took a democratic approach to this question

Q. Why India opted a democratic approach to the question of diversity?

Ans. 1) Democracy allows the political expressions of regional aspirations and does not look upon them as anti-national.

2) It allows parties and groups to address the people on the basis of their regional identity, aspiration and specific regional problems.

AREAS OF TENSION

Immediate challenges after independence



Other challenges after independence ↗ issue of Jammu and Kashmir
↗ North East [demands of separation]
↘ Dravid movement [south]

Linguistic issues ↗ Tamil Nadu protesting against making Hindi the national language
↗ Pro-Hindi agitations (Northern states)
↘ Punjabi speaking people demanding separate state.

Thus the challenge of diversity was met by redrawing the internal boundaries of the country.

New challenges

- 1) Punjab
- 2) Assam
- 3) Mizoram

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

- J&K had a special status under Art 370

Art 370

- It came into effect in Oct 1949, granted Kashmir autonomy of internal administration, allowing it to make its own laws in all matters except finance, defence, foreign affairs and communications.
- In spite of art 370 J&K experienced violence, cross border terrorism and political instability



- Demography
 - Jammu → mix of foothills and plains
Hindus (major part) + Muslims, Sikhs
 - Kashmir → Kashmir valley
Kashmiri Muslims (major) + Hindus + Sikhs + Buddhists
 - Ladakh → mountainous [little population]
Buddhists + Muslims [equally divided]



Roots Of the Problem



MAHARAJA HARI SINGH

- Before 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, a Princely State, wanted to have an independent state.
- Pakistani leaders thought that Kashmir region belonged to Pakistan, as majority population of the state was Muslim.
- The people of Kashmir thought themselves as 'kashmiris' above all.
- Sheikh Abdullah, leader of National Conference, wanted to get rid of Maharaja, but was against joining Pakistan.
- In Oct 1947, Pakistan sent tribal infiltrators from its side to capture Kashmir.
- This forced the Maharaja to ask for Indian military help.
- India helped, but only after the Maharaja had signed an 'Instrument of Accession' with Govt of India.
- However, as Pakistan continued to control a sizable part of the state, the issue was taken to the United Nations Organisation.

On 21 April 1948, UNO recommended a three step process to resolve the issue

1. Pakistan had to withdraw its entire nationalities, who entered Kashmir.
2. India needed to progressively reduce its forces so as to maintain law and order.
3. A plebiscite was to be conducted in a free and impartial manner.

However, no progress could be achieved under this resolution.

In the meanwhile, Sheikh Abdullah took over as the Prime Minister of the state of J&K in March 1948.

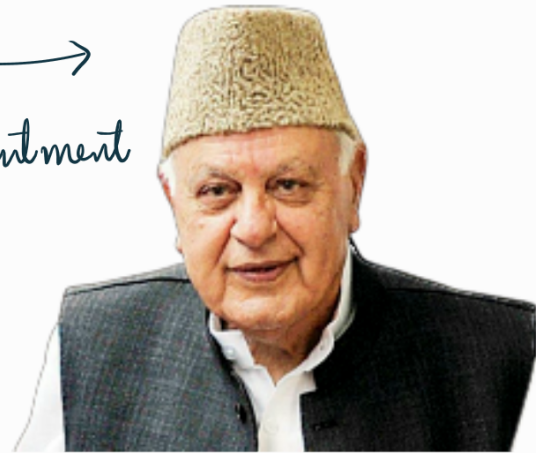
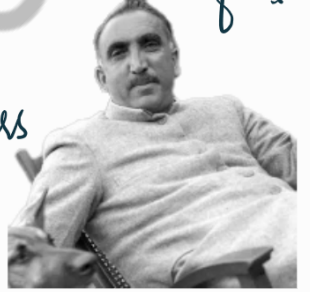


External and internal disputes

- Externally, Pakistan has always claimed that Kashmir valley should be part of Pakistan.
- Internally, there is a dispute about the status of Kashmir within Indian union.
- Kashmiris believe that the autonomy conferred by Art 370 is not enough.
- Major grievances of Kashmiris are as under :
 - 1) The promise that Accession would be referred to the people of the state has not been fulfilled.
 - 2) There was a feeling that the special federal status guaranteed by Art 370, had been eroded in practice.
 - 3) It was felt that democracy which is practiced in the rest of India has not been similarly institutionalised in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Politics since 1948

- Sheikh Abdullah had growing differences with the central govt about his position on Kashmir status.
- He was dismissed in 1953 and kept in detention for a number of years.
- National Conference was merged with Congress. Thus the Congress gained direct control over the government in the state.
- Few changes were made in the provision of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir which designates the Prime Minister of the state as Chief Minister of the state.
- Ghulam Mohammed Sadiq of Indian National Congress became the first Chief Minister of the state.
- In 1974 Indira Gandhi reached an agreement with Sheikh Abdullah and he became the Chief Minister of the State.
- He revived the National Conference and won in the assembly elections of 1977.
- He died in 1982 and the leadership of National Conference went to his son, Farooq Abdullah [Chief Minister]
- But Farooq Abdullah soon was dismissed by the Governor.
- The dismissal generated a feeling of resentment in Kashmir.



Insurgency And After

- National Conference held massive victory in 1987 and Farooq Abdullah returned as Chief Minister.
- It was believed that the entire election process was rigged which generated a political crisis in Kashmir.

In 1989, with the support from Pakistan, J&K fell in the grip of militant movement demanding separate Kashmiri nation.

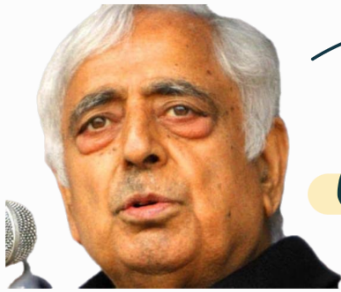
1990 - 1996 : J&K experienced extraordinary violence at the hands of the insurgents and through army action.

1996 : Farooq Abdullah (National Conference) came to power.

2002 : National Conference failed to secure majority and was replaced by PDP (People's Democratic Party) + Congress.

2002 and Beyond

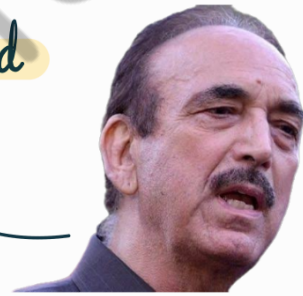
- Mufti Mohammad headed the government (for first 3 years) and succeeded by Ghulam Nabi Azad (INC) who however could not complete the term as president rule was imposed in the state (2008)



Ghulam Nabi Azad

CM of J&K 2002-2005

Mufti Mohammad



CM of J&K 2005-2008

- Another coalition government (NC + INC) came into power in 2009 headed by Omar Abdullah.
- In 2014, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed (PDP) came into power with BJP as its partner.
- In April 2016, Mahbooba Mufti (daughter of Mufti Muhammad Sayeed) became the first woman C.M. of the state.
- The President's rule was imposed in 2018 after BJP withdrew its support to the Mufti government.
- On 5 Aug 2019, Art 370 was abolished by the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019.
- Jammu & Kashmir was reconstituted into two Union Territories, i.e. Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

PUNJAB

(1 Nov 1966)

(25 January 1971)

- Haryana and Himachal Pradesh were carved out of Punjab.
- The State Reorganization Act of 1956 reorganised India into 14 states and 6 UTs based on linguistic lines.
- Punjab had to wait till 1966 for the creation of Punjabi speaking state.
- Akali Dal was formed in 1920 as the political wing of the Sikhs. [for the formation of 'Punjabi Suba']

Political Context

- The Akalis came to power in 1967 and then in 1977. [through coalition]

Q. Why political position of Akalis remained precarious despite the redrawing of the boundaries?

Ans. Reasons for precarious political position are as under:-

1. Their govt. was dismissed by the centre mid-way through its term.
 2. They did not enjoy strong support among the Hindus.
 3. The Sikh Community was internally differentiated on caste and class lines.
- Congress got more support among the Dalits, whether Hindu or Sikh, than the Akalis.

- Through a resolution passed at Anandpur Sahib (1973), a section of Akalis began to demand political autonomy for the region.

Anandpur Sahib Resolution

- It asserted regional autonomy.
- Wanted to redefine centre-state relationship.
- It spoke of the aspirations of the Sikh gaum (community or nation).
- It declared its goal as attaining the *halkara* of the Sikhs.

Cycle of Violence

- The leadership of the movement passed from the moderate Akalis to extremist elements and took the form of armed insurgency.
- These militants made the Golden Temple (Amritsar) as their headquarters.
- 'Operation Blue Star' was carried out in 1984 by the Govt. of India to flush out the militants, but this army action also damaged the historic temple and deeply hurt the sentiments of the Sikhs. [in India and abroad]
- Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated on 31 Oct 1984 by her Sikh bodyguards to take revenge for Operation Blue Star.
- Violence broke out in Delhi and many parts of northern India against Sikh community.
- Twenty years later, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh expressed regret over these killings and apologised to the nation for the anti-Sikh violence.

Road To Peace

- New Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi initiated a dialogue with moderate Akali leaders.
- Rajiv Gandhi - Longowal Accord was signed to bring normalcy to Punjab.

Q. What was Rajiv Gandhi - Longowal Accord?

Ans. a) It was agreed that Chandigarh would be transferred to Punjab.

b) A separate commission would be appointed to resolve the border dispute between Punjab and Haryana.

c) A tribunal would be set up to decide the sharing of Ravi-Beas river water among Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.

- However, peace did not come immediately. Militancy and counter insurgency violence led to excesses by the police and violations of human rights.
- In elections of 1992 in Punjab, only 24% of the electors turned out to vote.

- Militancy was eventually eradicated by the security forces.
- Peace returned to Punjab by mid of 1990s.
- The alliance of Akali Dal (Badal) and the BJP scored a major victory in 1997.

THE NORTH EAST

- Eight states are there in North East.

- | | |
|----------------------|------------|
| 1) Arunachal Pradesh | 2) Assam |
| 3) Nagaland | 4) Manipur |
| 5) Tripura | 6) Mizoram |

7) Meghalaya

+

8) Sikkim

Seven
Sisters

Brother



- This region serves as India's gateway to South East Asia.
- Tripura, Manipur and Khasi Hills of Meghalaya were erstwhile Princely States which merged with India after Independence.
- Founding Dates:

Nagaland

1963

Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya

1972

Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh

1987

- The isolation of the region, its complex social character and its backwardness have all resulted in the complicated set of demands from different states of North-East.
- Three issues dominated the politics of North-East:
 1. Demands for autonomy.
 2. Movements for secession.
 3. Opposition to 'outsiders'.

Demands for autonomy

- Demands for political autonomy arose when the non-Assamese felt that the Assam government was imposing Assamese language on them.
- Leaders of the major tribal communities wanted to separate from Assam.
- Several states got carved out of Assam viz Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Tripura and Manipur were upgraded into states.
- The reorganisation of the North-East was completed by 1972.
- The reorganisation was not the end of autonomy demands, communities like the bodos, karbis and Dimasas wanted separate states.
- In order to satisfy their demands some other provisions of our federal set up were used.

Secessionist Movements

Mizoram

- Some groups consistently demanded a separate country. these demands were more difficult to respond than demands for autonomy.
 - Some Mizos in the Mizo Hills area believed that they were never a part of British India and therefore did not belong to Indian Union.
 - The Mizo National Front (MNF) was formed when Assam government failed to respond adequately to the great famine of 1959 in Mizo hills.
- Under Laldenga (1937-1990)



→ Founder and leader of Mizo National Front.

- Led an armed struggle against India for two decades.
- Signed an agreement (for settlement) with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986
- became the Chief Minister of the newly created state of Mizoram.

- In 1966 the MNF started an armed campaign for independence. The MNF fought a guerilla war with the support of Pakistani government.
- The Indian security forces countered it with a series of repressive measures.
- These measures caused more anger and alienation among the people.
- After two decades, in 1986 a peace agreement was signed between Rajiv Gandhi and Laldungma.
- This accord granted full fledged statehood with special powers to Mizoram.
- Today, Mizoram is one of the most peaceful places in the region and has taken big strides in literacy and development.

Nagaland

- In 1951, a section of Nagas led by Angami Zapu Phizo declared independence from India.
- The Naga National Council launched an armed struggle for sovereignty of Nagas.
- After a period of violent insurgency a section of the Nagas signed an agreement with the Government of India but this was not acceptable to other rebels.
- The problem in Nagaland still awaits a final resolution.



Movements against outsiders

- The large scale migration into the North-East gave rise to a special kind of problem where the local ^(insiders) communities saw outsiders or migrants as encroachers on scarce resources [land, employment, political power].
- The Assam Movement from 1979-1985 is the best example of such movement against outsiders.
- The Assamese suspected that there were huge number of illegal Bengali Muslim settlers from Bangladesh.

- They felt that these settlers would reduce the indigenous Assamese into a minority.
- In 1979 the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) led an anti-foreigner movement.
- It was against Bengalis and other outsiders, and against faulty voters' register.
- The movement demanded that all outsiders who had entered the State after 1951 should be sent back.
- The movement also tried to block the movement of trains and the supply of oil from Assam to refineries in Bihar.
- An accord was signed between Rajiv Gandhi and AASU leaders in 1985.
- According to this agreement those foreigners who migrated into Assam during and after Bangladesh war and since, were to be identified and deported.
- With the success of this movement, the AASU and the Asom Gana Sangram Parishad organised themselves as a regional political party called Asom Gana Parishad (AGP).
- The Assam accord brought peace and changed the face of politics in Assam, but it failed to solve the problem of immigration.
- This problem is particularly acute in Tripura as the original inhabitants have been reduced to minority.
- The same feeling is there in Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh for Chakma refugees.

Accommodation and National Integration

- Lessons from Regional Aspirations in India

I Regional Aspirations are very much a part of democratic politics. We must deal with regional aspirations on regular basis. Nation building is an ongoing process.

II The best way to respond to regional aspirations is through democratic negotiations rather than through suppression.

III Significance of power sharing. Groups and parties from the region need to be given share in power at the state level.

- If regions are not given a share in the national level decision making, the feeling of injustice and alienation can spread.

IV Regional imbalance in economic development contributes to the feeling of regional discrimination.

- If some states remain poor and others develop rapidly, it leads to regional imbalances and inter-regional migrations.



The End

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