



Research Paper

Political Economy of Nationalism and Sub nationalism in India

Dr. Binod Kumar Jha

Associate Professor in Political Science, A.N.S. College, Barh (Patna) India

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ABSTRACT: *The emergence of nationalism in India at the all India and at the regional level is a middle class phenomena and subsequent to British annexation. The Indian nationalism was based on pan-Indian cultural homogeneities and an anti imperialism shared in common, and the regional nationalism was based on the regional cultural homogeneities. These two were inter-twined and dovetailed. During colonial period, the dominant Indian nationalities consolidated their position and after independence took over the state. But this was resisted, when bourgeoisie of regional nationalities ascended to a hegemonic position in their societies. The capitalistic path of development, chosen by Indian states perpetuates uneven development; this pattern of development poses difficult problems especially in a multi-national society where consciousness has a dual aspect. It is in this framework that the phenomenon of nationalism and sub-nationalism and its dichotomous relationship in Indian politics could be understood/explained.*

Keywords: *Bourgeoisie, Capitalism, Development, Machinofacture, Nationalism*

I. INTRODUCTION

(The literature on Nationalism and sub-nationalism in India are already vast and there is perhaps little to add to clarifying its meaning, nature or content. What I have attempted in this paper is to analyze these phenomena from political economy perspective, for this, a historical overview of the facts has been taken, and were analyzed at socio-economic plane. An attempt has been made to transcend the method of descriptive formalism. Finally, I am aware of the fact that for a proper assessment of these phenomena, more research work is needed. Mine is a spade work in anticipation of future work.)

Sub-nationalism in Indian politics has generally been regarded as something that is anti-system, and against the basic of a well-integrated and well developed polity. For our political leaders it is an anathema to national integration.’(1) Appeals for national unity are being heard from those in political power and they go on emphasizing the danger of secessionism and foreign sponsored conspiracies that may break up our country.

This negative thinking ‘emanates from the belief that India is a ‘nation state’ in the making and various ethnic and cultural communities inhabiting the country are in the process of getting assimilated in the melting pot of the Indian nationalism. This view may occasionally condescend to“ recognize the distinct cultural identities of many Indian communities and mouth slogan like ‘unity’ in diversity’ but refuses to recognize these small communities as nationalities and thus any attempt on the part of smaller under privileged nationalities to assert their identity is considered as a major threat to the Indian nation state”.(2)

In India the situation is different, Seen carefully it would be apparent that the terms ethnicity can be used to identify the racial category, but not as a comprehensive term to designate all the other socio cultural diversities. It cannot be applied in the Indian situation with equal analytical validity. It would at least be an approximation if we were to designate all identities like those based on religious community, language group and caste in Indian as ethnic identities.

“Those who subscribe to the melting pot theory in Indian seem to equate the concept of state with that of the nation. They seem to subscribe to the definition of nation and nationalism which gives a central place to the idea of state”- It is true that in social science literature there is a major school which address to this position.(3)

Now if one defines nation in terms of state, it will mean that every state will have to be nation state and this definition of nation also implies that in multicultural societies, having the bond of state, the dominant nationality will either assimilate the smaller ones or the smaller one will strive for the formation of their own nation state in due course of time so that there will be a persistent threat to integrity in all these countries. Thus it is quite logical for the dominant nationality to go in for assimilation even forcibly and to regard any assertion of national identity as a threat to the state itself. This perception has a serious lacuna because it overlooks the historical experience of countries, which are multicultural and where statehood and nationality are taken to mean differently. As Krejci and Velimsky point out;

“In Central and Eastern Europe-----statehood on the one hand nation or nationality on the other, were understood as two quite different concepts, statehood implying citizenship, nationality implying ethnic affiliation irrespective of citizenship”(4)

The historical experience of such a process have led a number of authors of various ideological disposition to base their definition of nations and nationalism on such factors as attachment to one’s native land and a wider kinship, common language, territory, economic life and psychological make- up.(k5) It should be pointed out that, here nationalism has been taken as a cultural phenomenon, not as a political phenomena having the bond of a state. Now even if we define the nationalism in cultural context, we cannot deny the fact that all nationalities, in modern world desire some national rights and regard themselves as political groups. Many have state and many others are aspiring for, it, although statehood is not an essential element of nationality. But all the nationalities are demanding” for a homeland where they can pursue their economic and cultural interest. Thus it is not necessary to consider it inseparable from the political organization of the state. Moreover, the existence of many nationalities within as state without being assimilated with the dominant one can be expected.(6)

In India or for that matter in any multicultural societies, this definition of nation and the attendant distinction between the state and the nation remains factious because the opinion builders, who belong to the dominant nationalism, are inclined to identify the nation with their own group. For them nation is synonymous with the state and they believe that the interests of the nation and state are identical. Therefore any political interest interfering with the advantage enjoyed by the dominant nationalities is branded as anti-national by them. It is important here to remember that “multi-cultural societies do not come into existence as a result of voluntary integration of various ethno cultural groups. Invariably such societies are formed as a result of conquest and annexations of the territories of the weaker nationality.”(7)

In the context of India it can be argued that, none of these two models could be offered with any authentically.

Now putting ourselves outside definitional controversy, we can say that;

A nationality is formed when a people sharing same common characteristics e.g. Language economic activities cultural etc. becomes collectively self-aware of this fact and allows it to be mobilized on this basis for further emotional integration unity and political advantages ranging up to the formation of a national state. This combination of identity marks for this formation may not be same in every case..... A nationality becomes a nation at a mature stage of its political economical development. Alongside of this development related to rising capitalist relation, nationalism arises as an ideology, clothed in emotional content in course of the relevant mass-mobilization led by a class or classes,(8)

Now coming to the specific case of India, we can say without any doubt that there has been a consciousness of India as a country down the centuries. This is partly due to the geographical factor and partly due to *Brahminical* culture .But notwithstanding these factors it was anti-imperialist struggle, drawing in masses of the Indian people that made loyalty to India supreme over all other territorial loyalties in the popular consciousness.

Now, on to the question, whether India is a nation, one may argue that “India is country certainly; but it is not a nation because it meets the requirement of neither a common language nor a common culture. It is a country which contains a number of emerging nationalities with different languages and culture of their own”. (9) Some scholars are of the view that the nationalities with in India began to emerge even before the British conquest, so that today we ought not to speak of emerging nationalities, but of nationalities that are fully formed already. (10)The roots of their view lie in its assessment of the stage of development of the India society on the eve of the British conquest.

In these scholars opinion the Indian economy, at the time of British conquest, contained the germs of a rising bourgeoisie class, and was at the same stage of its development, as the Western Europe before the industrial revolution.

It is however, questionable/debatable whether the Indian economy before the British conquest contained any 'germ' of bourgeoisie development;

Commodity production ought not to be confused with capitalist production. Merchant capital grows and flourishes, as Marx pointed out, on the basis of a pre-capitalist system without requiring any change in the productive process. The pace of technological development in pre-British India was extremely slow, and of no comparison to what was taking place in Europe between the 16th and 18th centuries. The manufacturing regarded by Marx as representing the last stage before the crucial shift to 'machinofacture' (factory system) had not been developed in Mughal India. Above all, There was little of no market in the country side for the product of the town, which flourished in a parasitical manner upon the distribution of the agricultural surplus, obtained principally in the form of land-revenue by the ruling classes'.(11)

It was therefore within a bourgeoisie nor any urge to demarcate separate regions as domestic markets.

The economic basis for the creation and development of nationalities was thus utterly lacking in India before British conquest. "The existence of regional languages and their development into literary language doesn't itself signify the emergence of nationalities. After looking into what was written in that language, we find these were simply a popular religious preaching and no way related to either patriotism or regional assertiveness. Thus we can safely say that development of these language had nothing to do with rising national consciousness".(12)

The emergence of nationalities in India is thus, a phenomenon subsequent to British Conquest and one that accompanied the rise of the Indian bourgeoisie for which British rule created the necessary precondition. But the growth of various nationalities was not even during the colonial rule. Some were at the higher stage of development, while others were at a lower stage. These latter remain nationalities with a varying degree of immaturity not only in terms of development of productive forces but also in terms of its ideological legacy. Political relations with neighboring nationalities, the population size and the universal tendency towards a degree of assimilation all these together decide how a nationality necessarily develops.

Even today in India not only is the nationality consciousness extremely uneven in different regions but the nationalities themselves have not generally fully developed.

The emerges of nationalism, both at the all-India level and at the regional level was a middle class phenomenon.

"During the colonial rule, the top position of the society was held by foreign capitalists and their allies and at the bottom were primary producers. The Indian industrialists occupied the middle rung, along with traders, petty landlords and various sections of the petty bourgeoisie, urban as well as rural... A middle class wants to project its own interest as the interest of large group, so that the latter could be politically mobilized in the struggle for power... This is how Indian nationalism as well as regional nationalism emerged. The former aimed at consolidation the all India market and reserving it for the Indian middle classes to the exclusion of foreign domination. The latter was and is interested in developing the regional market as an exclusive preserves of the regional middle class or classes".(13)

The freedom struggle too played its role in relation to the emergence of regional consciousness/nationalism in as much as it relied upon mass support it could not but give great impetus to the politicization of consciousness. On the other hand, by invoking the greater loyalty to the Indian motherland in a united struggle against British rule. It subjected the urge of the peoples of the various regions for developing into separate nationalities.

The protagonists of freedom struggle contrived their roles with an aim to generate maximum possible pressure over the colonial government for independence and at the same time to refute the imperialist assertion that India plural society lacked any kind of national consciousness.

The moderates the torch bearers of Indian freedom struggle looked upon the unitary state structure of Britain as a model and overlooked the India peoples multiple local loyalties.

During the colonial rule, British imperialism everywhere sought to introduce a market in land for its own purpose in India. But the tenure system differed from region to region In Bengal, for instances it was 'Zamindari system', in which the Zamindars owned many villages at a time. Whereas in a part of the south it was 'Ryotwari system', which involved a considerable number of owner-cultivator, no-doubt land-distribution in the latter was unequal, but it was not heavily concentrated in the hands of the few. These variations in land tenure led to different system of surplus creation and absorption and the size of the surplus also differed. It led to serious regional disparities.

Besides, different regions were also unevenly industrialized. West Bengal, with proximity to minerals coal and Calcutta port has been heavily developed. Maharashtra and Gujarat, especially Bombay city, also possesses an important industrial base and a cosmopolitan workforce, whereas elsewhere in India the industry was feebly developed or in most cases, non-existent.

There were critical antagonisms between regional and national capital, apart from class division; Growth of trade and commerce in colonial India meant the Creation of job and educational opportunities at coastal centers like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.. This led to the emergence of some consumer industries in *these enclaves and hence to the development of a merchant capitalist class which started to invest in industry. These gave the regions a head start over regions before independence was achieved... (14)*

II. POST INDEPENDENCE ERA

The urgency of achieving order and stability induced most leaders to shelve ideological commitments and acquiesce in postponing the implementation of the Congress's radical program. Pt. J.L. Nehru, while making sweeping concessions to private interests in defense of the Government's Industrial policy told the constituents Assembly in April 1948;

"After all that has happened in the course of the last seven or eight months, one has to be very careful of the steps, one takes, so as not to injure the existing structure too much there has been destruction and injury enough and certainly I confess to this house that I am not brave and gallant enough to go about destroying any more". (15)

Thus a peculiar combination of radicalism in principle and conservatism in practice was evolved by Congress just after Independence the sign of which were already apparent in the Congress before independence was quickly woven into the direction in which society should travel but left the pace indeterminate.

This dichotomy between should and reality and even between enacted legislation and its implementation should be seen against the background that India is a **soft-state. (16)**

There were two major problems before the new government of India just after independence. One was the dethroning of well over five hundred princely rulers and the integration of their states into the Indian union. As the Congress leadership was not prepared to countenance India's political fragmentation, It used all its resources of diplomacy, cajoling and legalized bribery to persuade the princely states contiguous to the Indian territory to join the Indian union.

The other which proved more tedious was linguistic organization of Indian states.

The last two-three decades of the 19th century and the first two decades of the present century witnessed the sprouting of various literary societies in the regional nationalities of India. All were having common impulses. All these professed great pride in their linguistic and cultural heritage. But their activities did not acquire any mass significance till they merged with the struggle for independence and most effectively against feudalism.

Most of the developments concerning the growth of regional consciousness and its concomitant demand of linguistic states occurred during British rule, and, as a consequence of that rule.

The earliest demands for linguistics states were voiced by the literary and intellectual stratum of the regional bourgeoisies and landholding groups. The *Sahitya Parishads* of Karnataka, Kerala and Gujarat and, the *Andhra Mahasabha* were predominantly petty bourgeoisie in the early decades of the century. The surfacing of such a body was the result of socio-economic changes that were taking place in respective societies along with the great improvements in communication. The catalyst of modern education was providing for a greater awareness of the mother tongue. (17)

It is surprising to note that demands for linguistics provinces, though politically developed by the second decade of this century, were not directed at the British, but found expression in demands of the Congress and the expectation that this would be granted with independence.

It should be pointed out here that the linguistic states demand was closely related to the literary and linguistic societies and their work in propagating the regional languages.

Under the colonial rules, the question of linguistic reorganization of states received scant attention. The territorial changes were governed mainly by imperial interests.

The Indian national Congress lent indirect support to the linguistic principles as early as in 1905 when it backed the demand for annulling the partition of Bengal. Yet another concession to the linguistic principle was the formation of a separate Congress province in Bihar and of the Congress provinces of Sind and Andhra in 1917.(18)

Notwithstanding this, it was only in the 1920 session at Nagpur that the congress accepted the linguistic redistribution of provinces as a clear political objective and in the following years the principle was adopted for the purpose of its own organization.

The success of the Andhra Struggle stimulated the struggle for reorganization in other parts of the country. The SRC (State Re-organization Commission) report which was released in 1955 generally accepted the linguistic principle, even though reluctantly, and recommended the continuation (with border adjustment) of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil-nadu, Hyderabad, Rajasthan, Vidharbha, U.P., M.P., Bihar, Orissa, Assam Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir and Bombay. Bombay and Hyderabad were multi-lingual and eventually had to be broken up into

the respective linguistic regions. The separation of Vidharba from the other Marathi speaking area did not confirm to the linguistic nationality principle and eventually no separate state of Vidharba was formed. Hyderabad was broken up and three parts attached to Andhra, Mysore and Maharashtra according to the Linguistic states.

The SRC report and of the organization that followed did not mean the end of the process. Rather it exacerbated those issues which the report had not resolved. "The Maharashtra-Gujarat bifurcation of Bombay came about after tremendous discontent and struggle, the big bourgeoisies of both the states preferred status-quo, but the people's movement developed in both these states, and finally the two states came into existence in 1960. (19) This was followed by the creation of Punjabi Suba. With this the process of reorganization was completed and trend towards smaller states set in.

The Movement for linguistic states was a broad democratic national Movement. In those states, where the masses were drawn into the struggle, there was a popular upsurge. Therefore, it is not surprising that, despite widespread opposition to the idea, it triumphed against odds. The opposition came from big business; the all India manufacturing organization and All India Exporter's Association publicly declared their opposition. (20)

The consequences of state reorganization, was the amputation and creation of many states, in effect, objectively consolidated the various linguistic nationalities by substantially narrowing down the gap between the state-territory and its ethno-linguistic core area. This made the states more homogeneous so that they could be easily mobilized on any issue on importance." Moreover, it consolidated regional social classes and gave politics a distinct class-character. All these added a different dimension to the problem of regionalism in India. It also gave a strong impetus to the development of political cultures, enhancing the political significance of caste and of educated regional elites."(21)

Another consequence was the rise of regional dominant classes, particularly the landlords and the rich peasantry at the state level in course of electoral processes. The power at the centre remained dominated by a pan-Indian monopoly bourgeoisie. In most of the states, as well as at the centre, the Congress party represented the coalition of monopoly bourgeoisie with landed classes. The division of various subjects between the centre and state reflected respective interests of monopoly capital and landlords. At the time of the framing of the constitution of India the division of powers between the centre and states reflected equilibrium of political power between the coalition classes. In a multi class state, the state apparatus becomes relatively autonomous and plays the role of mediation between the coalition partners. The situation in India became more complex due to the promotional role assigned to the state apparatus for economic development and social transformation. Under the planned development program, India embarked upon the path of capitalist development with a noticeable dose of state intervention. India's development path became regulated capitalist development. The development process in the country has affected political processes in terms of the interrelationship between various classes, old and new, on one hand and creation spatial unevenness with consequences for regional interest groups on the other.

In order to promote capitalist development in the country the state planned and transformed the agrarian structure from pre-capitalist to capitalist relations. Agrarian relations have been substantially transformed as a result of state intervention through various land legislations and development program. The overall thrust of the agrarian policy has been to eliminate parasitic, absentee intermediaries in the form of various categories of the *Zamindars* and absentee land lords, and to create in their place classes of capitalist farmers, rich peasants and viable middle peasants directly linked to the state. Though the objective of providing land to tillers has not yet been achieved but it has succeeded in removing various intermediaries. This has also led to the creation of a class of agricultural capitalists and rich peasants in various parts of the country more pronouncedly the green revolution facilitated further expansion of business and industry in the respective areas. This resulted in the growth of a regional bourgeoisie along with agricultural capitalists. In Southern India, particularly Andhra Pradesh, there emerged a nexus between agricultural capitalists and the regional bourgeoisie in business and industry, such elements in a rudimentary form, are also found in Punjab.

Though there is uneven spread of industry and business controlled by monopoly houses, they have an interest in a unified all – India market. They want the removal of various hurdles created by the provincial and local administration. Therefore this class favors a greater role of the centre in decision – making in India. This class has a close collaboration with foreign capital which also finds it convenient to deal with single administration at the central level. Therefore interests of foreign capital and Indian monopoly capital coincide, so as centralization of decision- making is concerned. These two components of monopoly capital find a convenient ally in the all- India service which controls bureaucratic state capital.

The educated middle class is another group which has experienced considerable expansion in the post colonial period. The developmental role of the state and emerging problems of administration of polity has resulted in swelling of this class. Growing corruption in administration and shrinking job opportunities in the face of a surging number of aspirants has given rise to the 'sons of the soil theory'. Though vacillating in character, most of the members of this class have become supporters of the regional interests.

In post reorganization period, if we analyses the various regional /sub-regional movements we find that in almost all the cases, the peripheral regions occupied by a particular social group had been relegated to the status of a hinterland, which only serves the interests of core community or regional centers. In this relationship between the centre and the periphery regionalism is the outcome of the real or perceived sense of internal colonialism. The deprived masses under this condition support regional formation because their expectations of material security are combined with their expectations of political security and advancement. Regional movements not only reflect socially formulated demands but, in-fact help formulate such demands, both at the elite and at the mass levels, because such movements make regional units more coherent and comprehensible for the masses, they prepare the ground for more intense mass demands. Some of these demands take the form of sub-regional claims of autonomy as a way-out for redressing grievances and disadvantages.

It should be pointed out here that, it is not necessary that regional demands have to be proportionate to the requirements of the area. But unfortunately in India, because of the pressure of votes in the democratic process controversies are fanned by exploiting mass hysteria. Popular support is thereby generated to buttress such demands and as a result, the infrastructure of developmental planning priorities is disturbed which further perpetuates the already imbalanced growth, giving an added momentum to regional movements.

Where 'sub-regional movements are based on native immigrants conflicts, the most common explanation points to cultural differences as a determinant of the conflict. For varying reasons such an explanation is inadequate, at least in the Indian context, two culturally different social groups may clash in one region but not in another. There is anti-Bengali sentiment in the middle class of Bihar and Orissa but no corresponding anti-Bihari or anti-Orissa resentment in Calcutta. Then there may be conflicts between the culturally different locals and some migrant but not the same locals and some other migrant-group, though cultural differences may be as great. For instances the sons of the soil in Telengana are hostile to migrants from the eastern part of the state with whom they share a common linguistic culture, but there is no resentment against the culturally different Marathi or Tamil migrants from other states. Cultural differences then may not be the cause of native hostilities against the migrant but they certainly are present in such conflicts. In fact, the magnifying of cultural differences becomes a political technique, by way of defining cultural (and consequently political identity)". (22)

The most plausible explanation for the growth of nativist political movements in India is given by Myron Weiner, he says;

"It may start in an area which has experienced a rapid growth of educational opportunities for the lower-middle classes enhancing their aspirations and expectations, but there is a high-level of unemployment among the indigenous middle-classes and a substantial proportion of middle class jobs are held by culturally alien migrants."(23)

The reason behind the demands regarding natives and some of the soil is mal-development and the rationale is the fear of being left out.

The adoption of capitalistic mode of production in India resulted in uneven pattern of development and centralization. This pattern;

"Poses difficult problems particularly in multinational society, where consciousness had a dual aspect. The logic of uneven development results in unusual backwardness as in the case of Assam and very rapid developments as in the case of Punjab. Sections of Assamese reacted to their neglect and backwardness by throwing up an ideology, in which even the non-Assamese (but Indian) were regarded as foreigners and every intervention of the central government was condemned as colonialism. In Punjab on the other hand, excessive prosperity has encouraged the big landowners and capitalists landlords to nurse ambitions for greater political power than is possible to achieve within the Indian union."(24)

The uneven development of the linguistic nationalities of India produces various social and economic tensions between regions and vis-à-vis the centre. As noted earlier, historically certain regions have developed under the impetus of specific changes confined to the particular regions. The historical fact reflects itself in all spheres. This state of affairs has been further exacerbated since independence.

The majority of the states constitute distinct economic regions apart from socio-cultural differences. According to Daniel Thorner, "Assam West Bengal, Orissa, Punjab, Kashmir, Rajasthan, Kerala, and Madras are states with clear-cut boundaries in the economic scene. Four other states he divides into two regions each e.g. U.P. western U.P. and eastern U.P". (25) Even these regions are complimentary in many respects because of market developments, therefore these classifications which are widely accepted with slight differences, show the economic basis on which the nationalities have developed. Each region has problem of particular types: it is the under emphasis of this factor that has greatly contributed to regional imbalances. By adopting a spurious

uniformity, the central government and its economic and planning units have strengthened the already existing trend of disparity.

Rasheed-ud-din khan too argues in the same vein when he says:

“the process of the infrastructure of the Indian federation is not yet over and (he make a plea that) the problem is really not of numbers but re-composition of the Indian federation based on objective criteria of socioeconomic homogeneity and felt-group identity in order to provide a more responsive infrastructure for an industrial breakthrough and modernization.”(26)

The unevenness of capitalist development and regional economic imbalances is a characteristic feature of the Indian union. “The role of the center in industrial licensing provides another clear illustration of this attempt to build a capitalists economy without regard to nationality disparities and social needs”. (27)

The planning process in India too has made its own contribution. It is in this background that agitation for steel plants and economic projects would be viewed, as the case of the Vizag steel plant agitation in Andhra and the oil-refinery issue in Assam. Given the concentration of scarce resources in the centre the client has to be obstreperous in demanding attention. The more noise is made the more attention is paid. While this course is often taken out of genuine frustration caused by economic neglect, the regional and parochial elements find it a convenient vehicle to further their interest instead of concentrating fire on the main culprit, the central government.

This condition of unevenness is sharply reacted by nascent bourgeoisie of different nationalities, who arrived later on the scene. They mainly rely for their labor and market on the local population. Their interests thus frequently conflicted with the big bourgeoisie which relies on a national market .Being late on the scene, these regional bourgeoisie found that some non-indigenous communities have already monopolized the market of their own home land, thus they enter into a situation of unequal competition .It is then that they begin to mobilize their own society under the banner of nationalism. Since this class occupies a hegemonic position in their respective societies, so it is able to projects its own interests as a interest as a interest of whole community.

The protagonists of Indian nationalism were able to advance their cause by mobilizing the Indian masses against British imperialism. The newly emerging western educated elites were at the fore front of that struggle. In the same way newly educated elites of the small nationalism are now launching a series of struggle against their perceived enemies.

It should be pointed here that the contemporary articulation of regional identities is quite different from what it was at the time of national movement or at the time of the struggle for linguistic states:

“The shift in regional articulation is a pointer of the larger change in the structure of political articulation marked by an incremental rise in reactionary movements. The recent intensification of regionalism etc. is a product of inequalities created and perpetuated by the operation of capitalism-uneven development regional disparities syndrome, which produces its own problems, owing to the prevalence of cultural contradictions, these problems were aggravated and over the years, have acquired autonomy of their own in the context of the overall crisis of the state”. (28)

There is no doubt that the liberal democratic process, initiated during the British rule and carried on after independence, has created a fellow feeling among Indians, even if only politically this feeling embraces even those communities, who were not a part of the traditional Indian culture in any sense. The political integration of these culturally non India communities has been taking place mainly through their newly emerging educated elites, who, while getting integrated in the political process, harp on the theme of the separate cultural identities., it is interesting to note that it is their assertion of separate cultural identity which very often enables them to acquire considerable political power, and a viable mean to protect their regional market.

it should be noted here that even those groups who have demanded secession at some point of time are gradually beginning to accept the reality of the Indian stat, but here again such;

“Conversion need not necessarily imply that they have come under the fold of the Indian great nationalism, it should be noted here that many small nationalities do distinguish between the state of India and the Indian nationalism. Attempt at integrating the various communities at the cultural level under the banner of Indian nationalism will continue to be resisted by the smaller nationalities. Thus, while the emergence of new social forces at the regional level generates condition for strengthening the nationalists politics of the smaller nationalities, the expansionist trend of the Indian nationalism and its attempt at identifying the sate of India as embodiment of this nationalism give tremendous boost to the process of mobilization of the smaller nationalities.”(29)

If Indian nationalities loses”its secular and federal spirit, it degenerates into aggressive great nationalism. Similarly however, while regional nationalism may have its own points, if it loses the spirit of unity and assimilation, it degenerates into chauvinist and in an extreme case even into secessionist little nationalism.”(30)

In fact, given the linguistic nationalities at their various stages of development what is brewing in the Indian melting is one nascent nation not many nascent nations” For one thing regional markets are getting more speedily integrated than before on the basis of a pan Indian division of labor, for another the big bourgeoisie in India have an investment pattern and political behavior which are pan Indian in orientation. This was necessitated by the existence of the very fact of under-development, which forced the dominant interest of the capital to operate throughout the national market.”(31).The capital of the industry in West Bengal, for instance is in bulk non-Bengali. Most of the heavy Industry of the country are situated in the non-Hindi belt, while agriculture husbandry and related middle range and small scale Industries are the mainstay of the Indo-Gangetic Hindi region working for their complementarily.

Again” since big business in India has no particular linguistic region to claim as its own home land, such a class would look forward to subordinate regional nationality formation to their own idea of nation building process. The Indian working class too because,; of its mixed ethnic composition have a stake in the later process, to which it has also been making its own independent contribution.”(32)

The regional middle and small bourgeoisie on the other hand, are today so interlinked with and objectively dependent upon the all India big bourgeoisie, “that it is no longer possible on their part to assert a totally independent path of capitalist development for their respective regional nationalisms.” (33)

Above all, out of the two national consciousnesses the pan Indian one appears to have more solid ground than the regional one in many cases. In fact around a dozen of major Indian nationalities, with varying sizes together account for more than 90% of the population. They occupy contiguous territories, living in a mixed society, are exposed to powerful and centralized modern communication media. These facts bring into focus the interrelationship – these nationalities as the integral part of the collective body of the Indian people as the nation on the whole.

With special reference to the north eastern states it can be argued that apart from the economy of the hills being tied with that of the rest of the country by that particular component of 20th century capitalism-under development their integration with India also has made them entitled to a share of national revenue, without the capacity for reciprocal contributions. Their elite have now realized that the balance of economic advantages in India at any state is still in favor of union rather than secession. This is further buttressed by safeguards for cultural autonomy. The argument developed by Anthony H. Birch thus does not seem to hold good in the Indian context.

The incorporation of local communities into a sizeable multi-purpose state involves cultural and other sacrifices together with economic and other advantages. The balances of sacrifices and benefits vary from period to period and, at any one time. It may also be in the subject of differing evaluation by the individuals affected:

Thus during the first half of the 20th century most of the citizens of Quebec, Scotland, Wales and Britain believed that benefits they derived from their membership of the Canadian, British and French states outweighed the cultural and other sacrifices involved. The recent movements of opinion on this subject are best interpreted neither as a retreat from progress nor as an overdue revolt against an oppressive system, but rather as a rational reaction to a change in the balance of advantage. (34)

III. CONCLUSION

The challenge the Indian state is facing today is how to achieve the right ordering of loyalties between the regional and national identities without restructuring the state on the basis of genuine federalism and decentralization, without providing a just economic atmosphere in which every nationality can develop itself. Without recognizing that every nationality in India has its own cultural identity, the problem of regionalism will continue to erode the legitimacy of the nation state as representative of the people, as well as its capability for inducing economic growth and development. “The knee-jerk response of the ruling elite which is of greater centralization of power will certainly not solve the problem. Such a centralized state will then have to increasingly depend for its legitimacy by associating itself with the manifest passions and interests of the dominant nationality and in the process assume an authoritarian that any attempt on the part of the dominant nationality to refuse to recognize that every nationality has a culture of its own. And a right to preserve and develop it, or forcefully construct or secure out a national identity can prove to be ephemeral. And “when this happen the India’s experiment of building a nation state in multinational society would conclusively be shown to have failed”. (35)

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