

# Regional Aspirations

## FACTS THAT MATTER

1. 1980s may be seen as a period of rising regional aspirations creating various regional movements which conclude in a negotiated settlement or accords between the government's groups. Indian approach maintained a balance in the principles of unity and diversity even by redrawing the internal boundaries of country in response to preserve the culture of different regions and linguistic groups.
2. Immediately after independence, India had to cope up with the issues of partition, displacement, integration of princely states and reorganisation of states i.e. Jammu and Kashmir issues political aspiration, North-East had no consensus to be a part of India and Dravidian movement briefly toyed with the idea of separate country.
3. Jammu and Kashmir comprised of three social and political regions namely Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh region. On the issue of regional autonomy, Accession was promised on reference of people. Special federal status guaranteed by Article 370, to protect regional autonomy.
4. During most of the period between 1953 to 1974, Congress exercised a lot of influence on the politics of Jammu and Kashmir. Finally, in 1974, Sheikh became Chief Minister of the state. Except it, from 1989, separatist politics was also surfaced in Kashmir with the stronger demand for intrastate autonomy rather than state autonomy. In present scenario, most of separatist in dialogue are trying to re-negotiate a relationship of the state with India.
5. In Punjab, Anandpur Sahib Resolution was passed at the conference of Akali Dal at Anandpur Sahib in 1973 to ascertain regional autonomy and to redefine centre-state relationship. It had a limited appeal and Akali government was dismissed in 1980. Afterwards, the movement launched by Akali Dal took the form of

armed insurgency and resolution became controversial.

6. In 1985, Punjab accord was signed between Rajiv Gandhi and Harchand Singh Longowal, President of Akali Dal to transfer Chandigarh, appointment of a commission to resolve border dispute and agreement for compensation to better treatment. But peace did not come easily, violence led many excesses and fragmentation of Akali Dal. Hence, it led to president's rule in the state. In 1997, first normal elections in Punjab were held in post militancy era and alliance of Akali Dal and BJP scored a major victory.

7. The North-East region consisted of seven states referred to as 'Seven Sisters'. The reorganisation of North-East was complete by 1972 but did not end the autonomy demands i.e. Bodos, Karbis, Dimasas demanded separate state in Assam and issues were resolved with the grant of some autonomy to these issues. Even 'Assam Accord' was signed over the issue of 'Outsiders' in Assam in 1985.

8. The Assam movement was combination of cultural pride and economic backwardness as it was against outsiders to maintain cultural integration and poverty, unemployment also existed despite natural resources like oil, tea and coal.

9. Regional aspirations range from demands of statehood and economic development to autonomy and separation were coming up which taught many lessons to us i.e. expression of regional issues is not abnormal phenomenon, to respond through democratic negotiations, power sharing among groups and parties, economic development of region and flexible federal system.

10. Goa was under the Portuguese along with Daman and Diu, which expected freedom in 1947 but Portuguese refused. Goa wanted to be merged with motherland and suppressed from religious conversions and civil rights known as 'Goa Problem'. In 1961, Government of India sent army under 'Operation Vijay' and liberated Goa from Portugal rule and in 1987, Goa attained the

status of 'State' position.

## **WORDS THAT MATTER**

**1. Instrument of Accession:** An accord signed between Maharaja of Kashmir and government of India on the accession of state.

**2. Insurgency:** An affair to be directed against one's own constitutional government within national boundary with the support of local people.

**3. Khalistan:** A separate state of Sikh community to maintain the autonomous Sikh identity.

**4. Operation Blue Star:** A code name for army action in Golden Temple in June 1984 by Government of India when Sikh militants made their headquarters inside Golden Temple.

**5. Seven Sisters:** It is referred to seven states of North East region to be referred as Seven Sisters.

**6. Mizo National Front (MNF):** It was formed in 1959 by the groups of Mizo under the leadership of Laldenga for autonomous States of Mizos.