

Demand for Bundelkhand

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Abstract

In 1970, the Bundelkhand Divisional Development Corporation (BDDC) was set up, but was wound up in 1992. The Mayawati government revived the BDDC in April 2008 and also formed the Bundelkhand Special Area Development Authority (July 2008) to counter the demand by Rahul Gandhi to form a Bundelkhand Development Authority (BDA). The MP government also set up a BDA in May 2007 for the development of its part of Bundelkhand and allocated Rs 10 crore for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007-12). Agriculture in Bundelkhand is not modernised, there are problems of ecological degradation, and acute shortage of drinking and irrigation water. All its districts figure in the 200 most backward districts of the Planning Commission. The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes face greater hardship because of limited access to water resources. The governments have paid hardly any attention to modern methods of water harvesting or the reckless deforestation. In districts like Mahoba, export-oriented betel farming has suffered enormously.

Keywords: Bundelkhand, Mahoba, Telangana, Vidarbha and Rahul Gandhi

Introduction

Separate state not a solution demands are often raised for a separate Bundelkhand state to end its plight and make it more prosperous. But, who are the people demanding it? Do they have popular support? The first is Raja Bundela, president of the Bundelkhand Mukti Morcha (BMM), who is trying for a bigger "National Federation for New States" that supports Telangana, Vidarbha, Gorkhaland, Poorvanchal, Bundelkhand and Harit Pradesh. The second is Sanjay Pandey, national convenor of Bundelkhand Ekikrit Party. Both of them belong to the film and the television world and live in Delhi. Others include Balmukund Goswami and Babulal Tewari of the BMM, and Badshah Singh, who has abandoned the cause after becoming the labour minister in the Mayawati government.

Suggestion to overcome these obstacles

1. The politics of castes should be legally banned with strict operation. It has been observed that although the caste practice is legally banned through the constitution by Article 17 yet, these have been practiced the society and ultimately penetrate into politics. Eventually, advantages of these have been taken by the political parties and leaders. In the states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal these have been more pronounced hence, the political leaders and parties easily take the chances of these. The ultimate solution lies to the attitude of the men. The people of the modern society should have modern attitude not traditional attitude.
2. Proportional representation is essential to stop the use of religion as the vehicle of communalism of the narrow minded political leadership and parties. There are many political parties in India, national as well as regional like BJP (national) Akali Dal (Punjab), BSP, Peace Party (UP), AGP, UDF (Assam) all are using the religion and caste system to get the support of respective community. Thus, the political leadership and political parties are very much responsible to create religious disharmony to fulfill

their narrow gains at the cost of national unity and integrity. So, the probable solution is would be proportional representation.

3. Equal distribution of national resources is necessary to overcome the narrow politics of regionalism and secessionism. It has been observed that regionalism gains its momentum because of uneven distribution of resources among the states. Not only immediately after its inauguration in 1950, Indian federalism began to receive diverse, often contrasting and contradictory assessments at the hand of academic observers, Indian and western. The earlier accounts of Indian federalism showed a lot of intellectual reservations about the subject. The centralized character of the Indian federation vis-à-vis the states' rights has baffled and preoccupied most of the observers. K. C. Wheare made one of the first authoritative comments on Indian federalism and described the Indian constitution as "a system of government which was quasi-federal...a unitary state with subsidiary federal features rather than a federal state with subsidiary unitary features" (Wheare 1951:28) [9]. But in the subsequent fourth edition of his work in 1963 he was still doubtful of the federal nature of the Indian constitution, and described it as 'quasi-federal' but added that it was not meant to be a criticism of the constitution or the government since "A quasi-federal system may well be most appropriate for India". (Wheare 1963: 28) [9] Ivor Jennings (1953) accepted India to be a "federation with strong centralizing tendencies" (Jennings 1953: 1). The states' rights issue, as we have seen above, was hardly debated in the CA. But it was taken up already in the early 1950s by observers as a critical area of judging the federal character of the Indian polity.

Thus K. V. Rao (1953) in a paper on "Centre-State Relations in Theory and Practice" took an extreme view to show how the centre was usurping the rights of the states (Rao 1953). In his subsequent work too he maintained strong reservations

about Indian federalism: “We can now sum up our impressions about Indian federalism. There are federal features, but they are not strong enough to make India a federation on par with any known federation so far” (Rao 1966: 328). Morris-Jones, who saw federalism as a matter of process and degree, considered it fair to say that India’s constitution was federal with important unitary features (Morris-Jones 1987: 19) although he was alert that India called itself not a federation but a ‘union’, and that the fact that other observers termed it ‘quasi-federal’ (Morris-Jones 1987: 121). But on the whole, he did not fail to identify the critical aspects of Indian federalism, and the forces which made it to work. The political character of Indian federalism attracted most of his attention. He identified the ‘hard competitive bargaining’ as ‘the character of Indian federalism throughout’ (Morris-Jones 1987: 132). He also pointed out that it was the ‘informal power structures of Congress’ that had been serving as the lubricant to the practical mechanisms of federalism in India, (Morris-Jones 1987: 121, 153) a view which has been shared by many observers of Indian politics ever since (Watts 1966; Kothari 1970; Rudolph and Rudolph: 1987). He also took note of the changes in Indian federalism since 1947 when it was ‘remarkably centre-directed’ to the sixties when there took place the ‘tendency for the balance of power to move against the Centre and in favour of the States’ (Morris-Jones 1987: 121, 249).

4. Reservation policy for different castes like SC, ST, OBC, MOBC have to re-think by the government. The other castes feel relative deprivation and also launch different protest movement to repel this kind discrimination particularly in education and employment opportunities and some others struggling to get the tribal category like Koch Rajnangshi in Assam.
5. Although, India is largest democracy in the world, yet it has to get a mature stage. All the pre-requisite of vibrant democracy in India is not available because of variety of reasons like:
 - a. There is a lack of democratic training.
 - b. There is a lack of well educated society.
 - c. There is lack of committed political parties.
 - d. There is a lack of committed political leadership.
 - e. There is a lack of initiative for women empowerment.
 - f. Neglect of girls education.
 - g. There is lack of inter-party and intra-party democracy.
 - h. Passive role of civil society.
 - i. Believes in traditionalism.
 - j. Widespread poverty and many more.
6. There is a need to establish inter-party and intra-party democracy to diminish undemocratic element in the society.
7. There is a need to stop political corruption, mismanagement and clienteles.
8. There is a need to eradicate extreme poverty.
9. The strict operation of constitutional mechanism to mitigate different problems arising out of huge diversity in India.
10. A great, vibrant and constructive role should be played by the civil society along with the every section of the society because this task is the collective responsibility of all citizens, politicians, educationists, artists, writers, teachers, parents, students, intellectuals, businessmen and trade union leaders not of one section of the society.

11. Proper decentralization must be materialized through the Panchayati Raj System to readdress the grievances of all the communities and regions of India.
12. Good and positive attitude of one community to another is essential to establish religious and communal harmony and thus to intact national unity and integrity.

Echoing perhaps Watts, Carl Friedrich also recognized the growing strength of Indian federalism, and its capacity to increasingly differentiate itself. He said: “India is clearly undergoing a federalizing process in the course of which federal diversity is increasing. It is a recurrent feature of this process that in the course of democratizing of a society, regional and linguistic-cultural communities become more articulate and demand recognition in the form of a set of political institutions, including safeguards for the identity of the particular community” (Friedrich 1968: 135-36). In conclusion, I would like to highlight two issues. First, India’s federal reconciliation of regional identity with autonomy has a democratic aspect. It operates at two levels. Any political demand for statehood, or sub-statehood, to begin with, must, first, demonstrate identifiable popular support born of mass mobilization, before such demands are conceded to. Secondly, the political institutions achieved (whether a state government, or a regional or tribal council) must be elected by universal adult suffrage in every five years, as it is the normal political practice for such representative institutions throughout India. Democracy rather than ethnicity is thus the legitimacy basis of such political institutions. Das Gupta (Kohli 2001: 49) has termed this “democratic responsiveness to cultural differences” in India. Second, going beyond the above, I have argued elsewhere (Bhattacharyya: 2003) that Indian federalism has provided the institutional terrain within which various ‘ethnic nations’ in India (e.g., Tamil, Telegu, Bengali, Sikh, Gujarati, Manipuri, or Assamese) have taken shape, defined themselves, and are able to protect and to celebrate their identity. The underlying principle in various regional accommodations of identity in India has remained internal self-determination. As we have emphasized in the paper, internal self-determination has remained the predominant form in which regionalism, and even sub-regionalism, has sought to express itself. The regional and sub-regional accommodation of identity in India has served to weaken the bases of political secessionism and separatism while not defeating the principle of (internal) self-determination (of nations). Long time ago, Joan V. Bondurant (1958) expressed her apprehension about the future unity of India as follows: “But if religious, communal, cultural and linguistic differences threaten the unity of India, they present, as well, a challenge to the political Union. For ‘unity in diversity’ is at once a threat and a promise” (Bondurant, 1958). Our study strongly suggests that while religious-communal differences in India are still a matter of some serious concern, the threat from the country’s cultural and linguistic differences has most effectively been met in ways in which diversity has been transformed into strength.

We have to care that in Indian context the existence of regional parts and regionalism are not similar. In Indian Politics regionalism means to love or more affection to a special part of state than country. In this way regionalism is opposite of nationalism, whose aim is to keep narrow fulfilling. In Indian environment this is a policy that is based upon language, religion, region etc. and tries to collapse the

way of nation building and give life to deconstruction and separatism. Indeed, with the passage of years, the multi-faceted aspirations, which together may be described as regionalism, have gained strength. In principle, regionalism need not be regarded as an unhealthy or anti-national phenomenon-unless it takes a militant, aggressive turn and encourages the growth of secessionist tendencies, (as it did in Punjab during the past five years or so). National unity is not impaired if the people of a region have a genuine pride in their language and culture. But regionalism develops into a serious threat to national unity if politicians do not go beyond their regional loyalty and claim to stand only for their regional interests if regionalism is to be regarded as an unhealthy phenomenon, decentralization too would be objectionable which of course it is not. So there is nothing basically contradictory between nationalism and regionalism.

Today in U.P. Purvanchal-Vikas-Manch is continuously demanding for Purvanchal. National co-ordinator of Lok Manch Amar Singh says, "Chief Minister of U.P. Mayawati is neither willing to make Bundelkhand nor Purvanchal nor Harit Pradesh; If she is really interested in making small states then she must bring a resolution to legislature where she keeps majority and after passing resolution, it must be sent to central government and he blamed that only Mayawati has written a letter to fulfill her duties". The chief minister appealed to the people to raise the issue but not resort to violence. Mayawati said she was also in favour of granting statehood for the Purvanchal region. "If people want, I have no objection to Purvanchal state either", she said adding that the party took a decision in this regard keeping in mind the sentiments of the people of the respective regions. "U.P. is a large state and it will be better if the state was further divided", she said.

The multilingualism of Indian society has been affected by the divisive sub structural of linguistic politics, undermining the state's role as a successful facilitator of economic development, giving rise to inter-state competition. Regionalism linguistic reorganization of the states, analyzing language as mode of asserting identity, language-politics-power nexus, linguistic hegemony, socio-political implications and the evolution of Indian federalism, It questions linguistic reorganization through economically, having suffered as a result of the division of the body-politic, culturally, educationally and economically, positing inter-regional and inter-ethnic communication, coordinated language policy, intra-disciplinary education, as means of an effective solution. Central government becomes clumsy, anarchy and struggle can be seen. Regionalism is not a new phenomenon in the Indian political system. In the pre-independence days it was promoted by the British imperialists and they deliberately encouraged the people of various regions to think of their regions rather than the nations as whole, with a view to maintain their hold over India during the national movement. After Independence the leaders tried to foster a feeling among the people that they belonged to one single nation. The framers of the constitution sought to achieve this by introducing single citizenship for all. With the same objective a unified judiciary, all Indian services, and a strong Central government was provided. But in view of the vastness of the country and cultures regionalism soon made its appearance in India. That makes the question of demand for newer states more complex, more problematic and calls to adopt more cautious approach, because forming some new states would

naturally oils newer demands for smaller states and in that way it has no end. There is needed and open minded debates and contemplation in polity and society which should be either initiated by civil society, academia, and media or by administrative bodies. The link between demand for newer states and identity politics should be criticized and the argument of development with administrative viability should be revered and considered important.

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