



STATE POLITICS IN INDIA

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September, 2021

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ISBN: 978-93-5568-059-4

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Further information on the Indira Gandhi National Open University courses may be obtained from the University's Office at Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110 068 or visit our website: <http://www.ignou.ac.in>

Printed and published on behalf of the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, by Registrar, MPDD, IGNOU.

Laser Typeset by : Tessa Media & Computers, C-206, A.F.E.-II, Okhla, New Delhi

Printed at : P Square Solutions, H-25, Site-B, Industrial Area, Mathura - 281 005



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COURSE INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this course is to introduce students to some features and patterns of the state politics in India. The course has fifteen units which have been grouped into five blocks. The first block has two units. Unit 1 is about the evolution of state politics as an area of study in India. Unit 2 deals with the approaches to study of state politics. Block 2 is about federalism in India. It has four units, units 3-6. Unit 3 deals with division of powers - legislative, economic and administrative between the Union and the states. Unit 4 is about relations between the states and local units of governance. Units 5 and 6 discuss the state autonomy, and sub-regional autonomy and governance respectively. Block 3 deals with the question of development in state politics. Units 7 and 8 in this block discuss the state development models and migration respectively. Block 4 is about party systems and electoral politics. Unit 9, 10 and 11 in this block discuss state party systems, electoral politics and leadership respectively in Indian states. Block 5 has four units which are about the politics of identity groups: unit 12 about Dalits, OBCs and women, unit 13 about linguistic and ethnic groups, and unit 14 about regions and tribes, and unit 15 about new social groups such as fisherfolks environmental movements and LGBTQ.

Each unit has inbuilt *Check Your Progress Exercises*. After having read the units, you can try to answer the questions given in these exercises. At the end of each unit, there are answers to the questions mentioned in the *Check Your Progress Exercises*. You can match your answers with the answers given in the unit. But be careful to write answers in your own words. The course ends with a list of *Suggested Readings*. You are advised to go through them.

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The background features a large, light gray watermark of the IGNOU logo, which consists of a stylized 'U' with a circular emblem inside. To the right of the logo, the text 'ignou' is written in a lowercase, sans-serif font, and below it, 'THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY' is written in a smaller, uppercase, sans-serif font.

BLOCK 1

INTRODUCTION

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BLOCK 1 INTRODUCTION

State politics is an important field of Indian politics. Indeed, national politics in India reflects the aggregated picture of politics in different state. State politics as a distinct area of study in India developed after several years of Independence. This block has two units. Unit 1 explains how state politics emerged as an area of study following the assembly elections of 1967 and 1969. Unit 2 discusses different approaches used by scholars to explain the state politics in India.



UNIT 1 DEVELOPMENT OF STATE POLITICS IN INDIA *

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 State Politics: the 1950s –1960s
- 1.3 Rise of Regional Forces and State Politics: the 1970s
- 1.4 State Politics: the 1980s onwards
 - 1.4.1 Assertion of Identities
 - 1.4.2 Impact of Globalisation
 - 1.4.3 Insurgencies and State Politics
- 1.5 Let Us Sum UP
- 1.6 References
- 1.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this unit is to explain to you how the subject of state politics has evolved in India. As you know there are 28 states and 8 Union Territories in India. These states have different regional, social and political features. Their features are reflected in politics in the states and the Union Territories. The subject of state politics deals with politics in different states and Union Territories. It is concerned with political organizations that are formed in different states and Union Territories, and with political processes and political mobilization take place in them. It also discusses the similarities and differences which are associated with politics in different states and Union Territories. Although the subject matter of state politics includes politics both in the states and Union Territories, the course which deals politics in them is generally known as State Politics in India. The state politics is different from national level politics in the following sense. While it deals with the patterns of politics at levels of states and Union Territories, politics at national level deals with the institutions and processes that are associated with the central or at all India level of politics. Unlike the state politics, all India or national level politics is concerned with general patterns of politics which occur at that level. The national level politics shows aggregated picture of politics which occurs in different states and Union Territories. After reading this unit, you will be able:

- To explain how subject of state politics has evolved in India
- To discuss the rise of political organizations;
- To link the political change in India with the growth of state politics as a subject.

* Jagpal Singh, Faculty of Political Science, School of Social Sciences, IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110068. This unit is adapted form of MPSE-008 (unit 1)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The present unit discusses how the patterns of state politics have changed in India since the 1950s. The main issues which are covered in this unit include changes in the status of states in the regional and national politics, the issues and problems, leadership patterns and political parties and political processes. The focus of the unit is to show how the patterns of state politics have developed over a period. State politics as a specialized field of politics in India developed in the post-independence period. The states of Indian Union assumed the form of distinct identities first time following the reorganization in 1956. Prior to their reorganization, they were placed in four categories — A, B, C and D states. But it was only in the 1960s that the political scientists felt the need to study state politics as a specialized subject. The disquieting developments during the 1950s and 1960s in several states prompted a large number of them to study politics in different states. In an attempt to place the state politics in India in a perspective, two seminars were held in the USA in 1961 (University of Chicago) and in 1964 (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) with the initiative of Myron Weiner. The scholars working on nine of the seventeen states, which existed at that time in India, presented their findings in the latter. The report on the first seminar was published in *Asian Survey* of June 1961. The papers presented in the seminar of 1964 were published in the first book on state politics *State Politics in India* (1968) edited by Myron Weiner. In the similar vein, Iqbal Narain edited a book *State Politics in India* (1976) which was the first attempt to cover politics of all states that existed at that time in India including Assam and Jammu and Kashmir, which was changed on August 5, 2019 into two union territories – Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. Its predecessor, Weiner's book, did not cover all states. State politics has undergone significant changes in the post-independence period. It has emerged from the periphery of the national politics to the centre stage in the politics of India. Since the 1990s the states have become partners in the coalition governments at the centre as well as in the states. On several occasions, state level political parties, leaders or governments influence the national level political agenda or policies. Earlier, they occupied secondary position in relation to the centre in India's politics. After the publication the book edited by Iqbal Narain in 1976, there have been many studies on different aspects of politics in Indian states. These aspects included politics of caste groups such as Dalits, OBCs or others, state level leaders and political parties, social movements, elections, etc. These are some of the many examples of issues that are studied in state politics. Some studies focused on studies in single or more states; some made comparisons of politics in different states. Studies in two volumes - *Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of Social Order* Vols. I and II edited by Francine R. Frankel and M.S.A. Rao and published in 1989 and 1990 are examples of how changing patterns of power relations in states became important theme of studies in state politics. Similarly, *Rise of the Plebians? The Changing Face of Indian Legislative Assemblies*, edited by Christophe Jaffrelot and Sanjay Kumar published in 2009 is an example of how growing significance of studies of state level politics.

1.2 STATE POLITICS: THE 1950S-1960S

State politics in the first two decades after independence grew under the influence of centre, which focused on the pursuit of the nation-state building in India.

During this period the Nehruvian model of development and the single party dominance of the Congress signified the politics in India. State politics was mainly a replica of the national politics. The central government occupied a dominant position in the Indian political system where the state occupied the secondary place. Under the directive of the centre, the state governments introduced several measures in order to contribute towards nation-building, like land reforms, and community development programmes. The Congress party shared power at the centre and in a large number of the states. Different factions within the Congress representing sectarian interests in the states were appendages of the faction leaders at the national level. The fact that the dominant party reigned in the centre and several states simultaneously gave the impression that there was a common pattern of politics in the states and centre. The governors, as appointees of the sympathetic governments at the centre, with a few exceptions, remained non-controversial. No doubt, it was a dominant pattern. But along with this, there also emerged dissenting patterns simultaneously within state politics. These developments challenged the dominant pattern of politics: the dominant position of Congress and secondary position of state politics. Within a few years of independence the Naga and Mizo insurgencies started in the North-East India, Plebiscite Front movement started in Jammu and Kashmir (which existed a state until August 5, 1947), and the demand for reorganisation of states was raised in south India. Even the parties with different ideological persuasions from that of the Congress played a significant role during this period in the politics of states. The socialists and the Left together in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and West Bengal, Jana Sangha in north Indian States, the Akali Dal in Punjab mobilised the people on difference issues against the Congress. These developments had set a tone for a pattern of state politics which was to emerge in India in the near future. The Dalit movement led by the RPI (Republican Party of India) in Maharashtra and UP, and the Dalit Panther in the Maharashtra, the cow protection movement of the Jana Sangha, RSS (Rashtriya Swam Sewak Sangh) and their affiliates in north India; socialist movements for the spread of Hindi language and opposition to the imposition of Hindi language in Tamil Nadu and demand for secession of Madras (now Chennai)/ Tamil Nadu from India were the early examples of ethnic dimension to the patterns of the state politics. The Congress hegemony was also challenged by conservative parties like Swatantra in Gujarat and Rajasthan. These developments had prompted Selig Harrison to call the 1950s as the “most dangerous decade”. The dominant pattern of state politics was challenged even from within the Congress. Faction leaders within the Congress were not behind in creating their respective social bases. Even while being members of Congress, they consolidated their own bases in their respective states. This, in fact, resulted in the trading of charges between various faction leaders. The example of Charan Singh is among the most appropriate here. He had already carved out a base for himself within the intermediary and backward classes of UP, while he was still in Congress. The faction fight between Charan Singh and other Congress leaders had resulted in the split of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh and the emergence of a very powerful regional and rural force in the politics of the north Indian states. This pattern found its expression in the defeat of the Congress in several states in the general election in 1967 and formation of the coalition governments in 1969. It set a new trend in the politics in the states of Union of India.

1.3 RISE OF REGIONAL FORCES AND STATE POLITICS: THE 1970S

Changes in the patterns of state politics during the 1960s-1970s took place in the backdrop of the demise of Jawaharlal Nehru – the decline of the Congress system and rise of Indira Gandhi who personalised the Congress and institutions of governance. One of the most significant feature of the state politics between the late 1960s and the 1970s had been the rise of the rural rich or the kulaks especially in the areas which had witnessed the Green Revolution. The most relevant examples are those of Jats in UP, Haryana and Punjab; Yadavs and Kurmys in Bihar and eastern UP; Reddies and Kammas in Andhra Pradesh; Vokkaligas and Lingayats in Karnataka, etc. Charan Singh formed Bharatiya Kranti Dal with the focus mainly on the agrarian agenda. He provided leadership and forum to a strong section in the state politics in north India for two decades (1967-1987). He, along with the state level leaders in Bihar and Haryana, dominated the politics of north India during this period. In a large number of the states strong regional leaders with formidable social bases among the agrarian classes emerged on the lines of Uttar Pradesh. These leaders and parties focused on the regional issues and demanded revamping the centre-state relations. The role of the governor who was perceived to be sympathetic to the dominant party - the Congress came to be questioned and demand for changing centre-state relations arose. These developments became decisive in the state politics in the subsequent years.

The process of coordination between the regional leaders and the political parties became conspicuous. Some of these leaders graduated to be the national level leaders. These leaders drew their strength from the regional/state politics (despite having graduated to the national politics) and led regional political parties. Imposition of emergency provided an opportunity to several state and national leaders and parties to come together against the dominant Congress. Regional and national parties formed the Janata Party at the national and state levels, and formed the governments in the centre and the states. The Janata Party-led governments both at the centre and in the states introduced certain measures which had repercussions for the state politics. The appointment of the Mandal Commission and introduction of reservation for the backward classes in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh set the new trends which were significant both for the state and national politics.

The state level leaders and political parties challenged not only the leadership and organisation of the Congress symbolised by Indira Gandhi, but also sought a stronger place for the states in the centre-state relations. Conclaves of the opposition leaders, appointment of Rajammannar Commission in Tamil Nadu the resolution of the Left Front in West Bengal and appointment of Sarkaria Commission in 1983, etc., for revamping of the centre-state relations, were some of the most significant examples of rising significance of the regional political forces during the late 1960s-early 1980s. The leadership of the Congress and Indira Gandhi was challenged by the J P movement and Gujarat agitation in the 1970s. Unable to meet the challenge of the regional forces, J P movement and verdict of Allahabad High Court against Indira Gandhi, the centre imposed emergency in the country for twenty months (1975-1977). The post-emergency era saw the elevation of the regional leaders like Charan Singh to the national politics. Along with this, state level leaders like Karpoori Thakur in Bihar, Devi Lal in Haryana, Ram Naresh Yadav and later Mulayam Singh Yadav in UP and

Check Your Progress 1

- Note:** i) Use the Space given below for your answer.
- ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) What were the dominant features of state politics in India in the first two decades following independence?

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2) Why did the Congress system or the dominant party system decline?

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3) Identify the characteristics of state politics during the 1970s.

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1.4 STATE POLITICS: THE 1980S ONWARDS

1.4.1 Assertion of Identities

The developments since the 1980s further contributed to the changing phase of the states politics in India and states’ role in the national politics. These developments were – frequency of coalition politics at the national and state levels, globalisation, emergence of yet another generation of leadership, assertion of multiple identities based on ethnicity, i.e., caste (dalits and backward classes), tribe, language; the farmers’ movements, insurgency in North-East, Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, and autonomy movements. Movements of different social groups have come to be known as new social movement. Though these developments were caused primarily as a result of the state policies, yet these were distinct features as compared to the earlier period.

The assertion of the dalits and backward classes in north India in the recent period has only contributed to the politics of similar assertion in the south India which took place much earlier. Politicisation of the dalits in north India in the form of the BSP, of the backward classes in the form of various incarnations of Janata Dals, in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, and also the non-party fronts related to various castes as well as the religion further added new dimension to the state politics in India.

The period also witnessed the rise of the rich farmers in the form of BKUs (Bharatiya Kisan Unions) in UP and Punjab, Shetkari Sangathan in Maharashtra, Khedyut Samaj in Gujarat and Karnataka Rajya Ryatha Sangha in Karnataka. These groups also had their earlier incarnation in the 1970s when they were addressed as kulaks in the north as well as the south. But there was difference between the trends of the 1970s and those of the 1980s. While the former as the product of the green revolution and the land reforms mainly sought the share in the political power and favourable terms of trade for agricultural products, the latter focused on the issues related to the market economy. The new social forces raised multiple demands in different states. These demands were reflected in the form of reservation, the creation of the new states and greater allocation of resources from the centre to the states.

1.4.2 Impact of Globalisation

The state politics took a new turn towards the end of the last decade of the twentieth century. Globalisation has weakened the position of the centre on the one hand, and enabled the states to be autonomous players in the national as well as state politics. The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) did not have an even impact on all states; some states have benefited from it while others lagged. In fact, liberalisation has resulted in competition among states to seek investments. Some observers feel that it has created disparity among the states. Some states have become more advanced while others have become more backward.

Lawrence Saez's book *Federalism Without a Centre* shows that globalisation has enabled the states in India to act as independent entities to pursue their agendas; they can now negotiate directly with the international donors, and enter into agreement with different agencies. Of course, this has to be done with the consent and approval of the central government. It was not possible in the pre-globalisation phase. Globalisation has also resulted in the erosion of inter-governmental institutions. Saez argues that the inter-governmental cooperation has given way to "inter-jurisdictional competition".

During the phase of globalisation even the party system has witnessed changes. In most of the states, two or more than two parties emerged as principal parties. State level parties are oriented towards specific regions, religion or caste. These parties are able to exercise their influence through pre and post election alliances, fronts and partners in the coalition governments. The most glaring examples in this regard are: BSP with its base in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Lok Dal, Indian Rashtriya Lok Dal, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Nationalist Congress Party, Akali Dal in North Indian States; Biju Janata Dal in Odisha in East; Telugu Desam Party, AIADMK and DMK in South, and Shiv Sena in western India. In North-East India regional political parties abound.

The role of political parties is generally focused on electoral mobilisation. But emergence of new social forces like the dalits and OBCs has also added to the non-electoral mobilisation in the state. The latter, however, gets linked to the electoral mobilisation also.

The proliferation of political and social forces does not allow a single force to dominate the state politics; at the same time all of them want a share in political power. While there are broad ideological basis of the formation of coalitions or political fronts of both the ruling and opposition, the main causes of their formation are based on practical and political considerations.

1.4.3 Insurgencies and State Politics

Besides the issues discussed so far in this unit, the insurgency and related issues occupy a central place in the politics of several states especially in North-East India, Punjab in the 1980s and Jammu and Kashmir (which was a state until August 5, 2019 when it became a Union Territory along with Ladakh). These developments not only impact politics of respective states but also have serious repercussion on national politics of the country. The problems of insurgency are related to the issues of development, inter-ethnic relations, autonomy or self-determination. While insurgency is directed against the nation-state or its referents, in several instances it gives birth to the ethnic riots and conflict among the ethnic groups. Problems of insurgency is not new to India. As mentioned earlier, India faced such problems immediately after the achievement of Independence like Naga and Mizo insurgency in the North-East India, Plebiscite Front agitation in Jammu and Kashmir, demand for a separate sovereign state for Tamil speaking population in south India, etc. While the rise of the state leaders and parties till the 1970s challenged the dominant party system, insurgency movements question the homogenising “nation-building” approach of the centre in support of “federation-building” approach. In some cases insurgency has been a by-product of autonomy movement or the movement against the outsiders. In the process new groups demand autonomy or self-determination. Such examples abound in the North-East India. For example, supporters of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) movement, Bodo’s and Karbi’s movements were once part of the All Assam Students Union (AASU) agitation in Assam. Having felt neglected by the dominant groups within the AASU agitation, they resorted to their separate agitations demanding sovereignty or autonomy within the Indian union.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the Space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Explain the impact of identities on the state politics in India.

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- 2) What is the relationship between globalization and state politics in India?
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1.5 LET US SUM UP

State politics in India has developed through phases. For around two decades following independence, especially since most of the states assumed their distinct identities in the wake of the reorganisation of states in 1956, state politics largely followed the pattern of the national politics. The Congress then known as single dominant party, generally controlled the governments both at the centre as well in the states. However, the state politics which assumed the distinct form by the end of the 1960s was a precursor to the defeat of the Congress in 1967 general elections in several states and formation of non-Congress governments in 1969. There emerged regional leaders and political parties with their strong social bases. Reasons for these developments lay in the factionalism within the Congress in several states and popular mobilisation of the people by the opposition parties in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Emergency gave an opportunity to the state level leaders with regional bases to come together on the same platform.

By the 1980s rise of the identities based on caste, region, religion and ethnicity and that of the new generation of leaders, with their regional bases and parties, agendas of the states got a prime place in politics of India. Coinciding with the impact of globalisation and dilution in the role of the nation-state, states in India have come to occupy a centre stage in Indian politics. The states, the regional political parties and leaders are playing decisive roles in the national politics. They do so as members of coalitions or within the political space outside political institution. This was not possible before the 1990s. Therefore, we can say that state politics has participants in the national politics has entered a new phase where states are no longer the uncritical followers of the centre.

1.6 REFERENCES

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1.7 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) During the first two decades the characteristics of state politics included dominance of the Congress party and the central government. However, the Congress-party was faction-ridden. The state politics was a replica of the national politics. During this period the central government introduced Nehruvian model of development which aimed at nation-building.
- 2) The Congress system declined due to the following reasons: inability of the Congress-led government to meet the aspiration people, factionalism with the Congress and mobilization of people by the non-Congress parties against the failure of Congress-led governments.
- 3) The features of state politics in the 1970s included decline of the Congress system and personalization of the Congress, rise of rich farmers in the green revolution-affected areas, and the rise of regional parties and leaders.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Due to the impact of identities regional aspirations in states have emerged. These are reflected in emergence of state level issues, leadership and organizations.
- 2) Globalisation has resulted in competition among different states to attract FDI. Due to its impact the states can negotiate directly with the international donors.

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Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Systemic framework
- 2.3 Marxian Frameworks
 - 2.3.1 Classical Marxian framework
 - 2.3.2 Neo-Marxian Framework
- 2.4 The Post-Modernist frameworks
- 2.5 Federation-Building Framework
- 2.6 Social Capital Framework
- 2.7 Frameworks to Study Elections
- 2.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.9 References
- 2.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

Politics is a broad phenomenon. There are several institutions, organizations, processes and issues that are related to politics. Because of vastness of the scope of politics, it becomes difficult to explain politics. Besides, politics is a fast changing process. In such a situation, it becomes difficult to understand politics. The question arises as to which aspects of politics should be studied, how they should be studied, etc. This problem can be solved if we have some way to study politics. There are some ways or tools which suggest as to how we should study politics, which issues should be given priority. These ways are known as frameworks. Any attempt to understand reality without a framework is like groping in the dark. Thus when applied to study state politics, these frameworks can be referred to as the frameworks for the analysis of state politics. In this unit, you will read about different frameworks to understand state politics in India. After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the meaning of various frameworks to understand state politics;
- Underline the need to use the frameworks;
- Compare various frameworks to explain state politics.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As you have studied in unit 1, development of state politics in India was marked by the emergence of new issues, processes and political forces over more than six decades. These changes gave distinct identity to the state politics. They also drew the attention of scholars to study them. Political scientists have used different frameworks in order to capture and understand patterns of state politics in India

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It should be noted that there are no specific frameworks meant exclusively to state politics. The same frameworks can be applied to study politics at any level of its operation—national, state or local. The categorisation of frameworks is generally known by the level at which it is applied.

2.2 SYSTEMIC FRAMEWORK

Systemic framework is one of the two frameworks which have been most commonly used to analyse state politics. The other such framework is Marxian, which you will study in the next section. Systemic framework is also known by its variants like structural-functional, modernisation or developmental frameworks. Indeed, till the 1970s these two frameworks were the predominant. As you will study in this unit, there also emerged other frameworks in the later period. But these two frameworks continue to be used in one or the other forms. Some of the later frameworks are the off-shoots of these two principal frameworks - the systemic and the Marxian. Besides, some scholars have used a combination of frameworks at the same time.

Let us begin with the systemic framework. As a part of the behavioural movement in social sciences, this framework was adopted by political scientists to study changes and order in the political systems. Developed basically in America, this framework was used to study the politics of the countries which had been liberated from the colonial rule. It became very popular in these countries following the publication of G. A. Almond and J. S. Coleman (ed.) *The Politics of Developing Areas* in 1960. The basic features of systemic framework are the following. The unit of political activities is a political system. The political system consists of political institutions/ structures and processes. Different constituent structures/ institutions of the system keep interacting, conflicting and adjusting with each other, balancing and counter-balancing themselves. These processes occur in a social and political milieu. In such situation the political system maintains itself. It does not break down. The political system thus is resilient. Many political scientists have followed the systemic framework to study Indian politics. It has been used to study both the politics of the country as a whole and also state politics. The most important example of its application to all India level politics is Rajni Kothari's *Politics in India*. With the recognition of state politics as distinct arena of study, the systemic framework came to be used by several individual scholars in case of studies of individual states or the group of states. They studied various aspects of state politics. These aspects included principally political parties, factions within parties, caste, religion, language, leadership, election, pressure groups, etc. These aspects were also considered as sub-system of political system. Two issues which are among the most significant part of studies are political parties and caste. Paul Brass and Richard Sisson have studied Congress in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan respectively applying the systemic framework. Richard Sission studied the institutionilisation of Congress—adaptability of modern institution, political party to the traditional system of caste. Rajni Kothari, in fact, had conceptualised Congress party as Congress System. Congress had shown resilience in adapting to the factionalism within it. These are some examples of the application of systemic framework.

Caste also drew attention of political scientists like that of the sociologists. In an attempt to understand the developing or traditional societies, they strove to comprehend the interaction between the modernity and the traditions. Modernity

was identified with modern political institutions and processes—elected government, nation-state, modern leadership or elite, universal adult franchise, parties, elections, etc., which were new to the newly decolonised countries. And tradition was identified with the ascriptive or the primordial attributes like caste, religion, tribe, etc. While studying interaction between modernity — elections, political parties, etc. and the tradition like caste Rajni Kothari argues that the interaction between caste and politics is a two-way process; both caste and politics change each other. In the process caste no longer plays the traditional or ritualistic role. It has got secularised.

While pursuing pioneering studies of politics in different states within broad systemic framework, published in Myron Wiener (ed.) *State Politics in India*, a large number of scholars focused on the following aspects — the social and economic environment of political processes, description of political processes, and performance of state government. The principal variables to study social and economic environment included social configuration (caste, religion, language, etc.), economic structure, rural-urban divide; the description of political processes dealt with political parties (with special emphasis on factionalism within Congress), interest groups, leadership pattern and conflict over public policy; and performance of government was assessed primarily in terms of distribution of goods and services. The scholars used these variables in varying degrees, but the common framework of their analysis has been systemic framework.

The studies of different states which have been published in Iqbal Narain (ed.) *State Politics India* are also done in the systemic framework; they also give prominent place to the context of state politics. The context includes history, political status of states, roles of states in national movements, castes and religious composition, levels economic developments, role of educated middle classes. The differences in the levels of these determinants or the context get reflected in differences in state politics. Despite these differences, general framework of analysis in these studies is systemic analysis.

Systemic framework has come under attack from various quarters. Its most scathing critique has been provided by the Marxist scholars. They argue that systemic framework overlooks the role of class in politics; it undermines the significance of history in political processes; it subordinates the state to the political system and does not link the politics within a country to the influence of outside forces like imperialism. They contend that systemic framework is basically anti-change and status quoist.

2.3 MARXIAN FRAMEWORKS

The Marxian framework analyses politics in terms of class relations or social relations of production and forces of production. It considers politics as reflection of class relations. Politics is impacted or determined by the economic relations in a society. The political institutions including the state are representatives of the class interests. And in a class divided society they serve the interests of the upper or the propertied classes. Unlike the systemic framework the Marxian framework links the politics in a developing country to the imperialism of the developed countries. The imperialism influences the politics in the developing countries by the conditionalities of the international funding agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As a result of these

conditionalities, the states within the developing countries devise policies which adversely affect the ordinary people. Peoples' reaction to these policies form the part of class struggle against the ruling classes. Unlike the system analysis, the Marxian framework traces the politics to its history. It uses the principle of dialectical materialism to comprehend the social and political reality. The application of dialectical materialism is known as historical materialism. It is worth emphasising that the application of Marxian analysis has been more interdisciplinary in comparison to the system analysis. There are differences among the Marxist scholars regarding the determining role of class or economic factors. In the light of these differences, the Marxian framework can be divided into two groups —classical and neo-Marxism frameworks.

2.3.1 Classical Marxian Framework

The classical Marxian approach mentioned in the *Communist Manifesto* accords an over- determining role to economy in relation to politics. In this case the economy is base and the politics is superstructure. Marx and Engels revised their thesis regarding the determining role of base in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of the Louis Bonaparte*. They now believed that superstructures are not always determined by the base. The latter has its relative autonomy. But in the ultimate analysis it is the base which determines the superstructure. Thus politics has its relative autonomy.

Like the system framework, the classical Marxian framework has also been used to study politics and the national and state levels. The prominent all India level studies relating to post-independence period by classical Marxian framework include Charles Bettelhiem's *India Independent* and Achin Vanayak's *The Painful Transition: India's Bourgeois Democracy*. The prominent application of the classical Marxian analysis has been to study the agrarian movements, agrarian relations and land reforms and the trade union movements in different states.

The classical Marxian framework is criticised for giving undue importance to economic factors in comparison to the non-economic factors. The followers of the classical Marxian approach counter this charge: the Marxian framework accepts the autonomy of politics from class, which is relative, but ultimately it is the class which is determining; it is rather the followers of system framework, which ignore caste or non-economic factors at cost of role of class.

2.3.2 Neo-Marxian Framework

The Marxian perspective which gives adequate focus to the non-economic factors —culture, consciousness to the analysis of politics or any other issue is known as neo-Marxism. The neo- Marxism has emerged as a result of the influence of Gramsci, Frankfurt School and Ralph Miliband. The Gramscian impact is most visible in the subaltern school. Popularised by Ranajit Guha subaltern school is significant in the study of modern Indian history. But the insights and concepts used by the subaltern school are used by individual political scientists to study the contemporary politics as well. The scholars applying the subaltern framework argue that the ordinary people develop their autonomous consciousness and take decisions accordingly, without the impact of outside agencies. Belonging to the Frankfurt School, as based in Frankfurt, Germany philosophers like Althusser, Kolakosky, Poulantzas, etc. criticised the dialectical materialism of the classical Marxism.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note:** i) Use the Space given below for your answer.
- ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Discuss how the systemic framework is used to study state politics.

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2) Identify the basic features of the Marxian framework.

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2.4 THE POST- MODERNIST FRAMEWORKS

As you have studied in unit 1, several significant political, social and economic changes have occurred in India. These changes are denoted by advancing globalisation, democratisation, decentralisation, emergence and assertion of identities based on caste, religion and ethnicity, and new social movements. These developments are being captured from various perspectives including the systemic and the Marxian. Some scholars are mixing more than one framework. But there is a growing understanding of some scholars that hitherto available frameworks are not able to explain the new features of politics. They follow the alternative frameworks, which are known as the “post- modernist” framework. Inspired by the writings of philosopher like Lyotard, postmodernism has become a significant framework of analysis for several disciplines. The adherents of the postmodernist framework hold the modernist project of development and its referents responsible for crisis in the society. According to them, the modernist project has not given the autonomy to smaller identities, traditions and indigenous knowledge system. The application of the postmodern perspective is necessitated by the simultaneous rise of identities, social movements and heightened social conflicts or even ethnic/ communal riots. The scholars who use the postmodernist framework find an alternative to modernity in the traditions, sustainable development and indigenous knowledge. The common adversary in modernity has enabled the Gandhians, Socialists, “non-traditional” Marxists, environmentalists, etc. to come to a common platform. Such movement—disenchantment with modernity and search for an alternative is referred to as post-modernism. The postmodernist frameworks are used to study identities, riots, social movements. They are used by scholars belonging to different disciplines.

Let us consider its application to the study of state politics. There is a growing understanding among some scholars that studying the political system as mega unit of analysis - nation-state, political system, party system, caste system, etc. has been impacted by the modernisation project. While in the practice politics of modernisation or modernity does not give enough autonomy to the parts of a political unit, in academic studies the impact of modernisation project or modernity is reflected in the neglect of these parts. In order to break away from such framework of analysis, a large number of scholars emphasise the need to study the fragments of the mega units, to acknowledge their autonomy.

Inextricably linked to the post-modernist perspective is the discourse or deconstructionist analysis. According to the “discourse” or “deconstructionist” perspective a narrative can be understood by breaking its contents into pieces or by deconstructing it. The best way to understand it is contextualising the narrative in terms of knowledge power and discourse formation, areas which have been theorised extensively among others by Michel Foucault. For example, in case of conflict between more than one party, it is difficult to know as to what is the truth. Every protagonist in the conflict justifies its version, and logically; it is difficult to know which version is true. In such a situation, if the conflict, parties and processes related to it are placed in specific context, it is possible to understand it. Paul Brass in his books *The Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in Representation of Collective Violence* and *Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* has developed a framework to analyse the ethnic riots between social groups. He argues that it difficult to understand the reality in the riots. It can only be possible by placing the riots, institutions, persons and processes in proper context.

2.5 FEDERATION-BUILDING FRAMEWORK

This framework is developed against the modernisation or development perspective to study the problems related to the self-determination movements - autonomy movements, insurgencies, secessionist movements and conflicts arisen because of them, in the states located in the periphery of the country, especially North-East India; it can also be applied to Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab or any other state where self-determination movements take place. The most articulate expression of this perspective is found in Sanjib Baruah’s *India Against Itself*. Advocates of this perspective argue that the modernisation or development framework to study the problems of federalism, self-determination movements is biased towards the formation of nation-state, it ignores the point of view of the segments which form the nation-state. The nation-state, according to them, is actually a construction. Such perspective sidetracks the problems of the states by looking at the issues in terms of dichotomy between tradition and modern, incongruence between the aspiring new social forces and the ability of the system to satisfy their demands. The policy makers and the scholars representing the dominant opinion in the country do not take into consideration the perspective of the constituent states. They adopt “step motherly” and arrogant attitude towards the smaller states. Sanjib Baruah suggests that the “nation-state” perspective should be discarded and “genuine federation-building” perspective should be followed so that the “sub-nationalism and Pan Indianism” have stronger relations.

2.6 SOCIAL CAPITAL FRAMEWORK

With the publication of Putnam's *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, social capital has become quite popular concept to study the significance of associations in public life. Social capital is considered to be indicative of existence of civil society and democracy. Drawing on Toquevillian notion of associations, the Putnam popularised the concept of civil society; attributes of which are trust, shared values and norms and networking among the members of associations. The rise of new social movements, civil societies and realisation to study substantive democracy has added to the significance of this perspective. In an attempt to study social capital in fragmented societies, the scholars have given significance to it. Ashutosh Varshney in his book *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* has used social capital framework to study ethnic riots in six cities of India. He argues that ethnic riots occur in the cities where the people do not have good associational relations among themselves. And they do not occur where people have associational relations. He seeks substantiate his argument with the empirical study of pairs of six cities, three of which have witnessed riots and three of which have not. In the similar vein, a large number studies which have used social capital framework to study politics in some states have been published in *Interrogating Social Capital* edited by Dwaipayan Bhattacharya, Niraja Jayal, Sudha Pai and Bisnu N Mahapatra. The scholars of these studies attempted to study of possibility of existence of social capital and its relationship to democracy in states of India, as a case of segmented society.

2.7 FRAMEWORKS TO STUDY ELECTIONS

Elections have been considered as the most expressive medium of existence of democracy. Indicative of only minimalist notion of democracy, elections, however, according to critics do not always prove the existence of true democracy unlike the substantive democracy. Nevertheless, elections are among the most significant features of democracy in India, at various levels of their operation - national, state or local. Their significance has got further enhanced with the increased frequency of elections in India since the last decade of the twentieth century. Elections have attracted the attention of scholars, journalists and psephologists to study electoral politics, especially at the national and state levels. The general interest in elections which mainly started in the 1960s has got further boost since the 1990s. A host of people, survey agencies, psephologists conduct surveys before and after elections to cater to the immediate need to satisfy the public curiosity as well as to provide data to analyse democracy in India. This is known as survey research. The efforts in this direction by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi, are note worthy so far as the usage of its data for the usage of academic analysis is concerned. The election surveys done on the meticulously selected samples collect data on the profiles of voters, constituencies and relate the election result to assess the performance of parties, democracy, etc. Answers to questions like "Is India Becoming More Democratic?" are sought in the light growing participation of large number of social groups.

Since survey research to study elections are time - bound, conducted before or after elections, they do not tell as to what happens when elections do not take place. Paul R. Brass argues that if survey research is corroborated with the

ecological analysis, we can be able to make much better analysis of political processes. Ecological analysis means the analysis of data from various regions of a country or state within the country. These data could be about economic, social, educational, etc., profile of people of people living in different areas. With the help of correlation coefficient analysis a relationship between the electoral performance of political parties with different social groups can be ascertained. Brass combined the survey data with ecological analysis to study “*The Politicization of Peasantry in UP*”.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note:** i) Use the Space given below for your answer.
- ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.
- 1) Discuss how the post-Modernist frameworks are applied to explain identity politics in the states.

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2.8 LET US SUM UP

To sum up, frameworks are necessary tools to study the social reality. For the study of politics there are some principal frameworks. These are - systemic, Marxian, neo-Marxian, postmodernist, frameworks to study elections, etc. The systemic framework considers political unit of analysis as a system. It argues that every system consists of various components which keep conflicting and adjusting with each other. In the process, the system maintains itself; it adapts to the challenges and the environment. The Marxian framework on the other argues that politics is reflections of the class relations in the society. The nature of politics depends on that of economic contradictions in a society. But there have been changes in this type of Marxian framework. The advocates of these changes agree that economy is important in impacting politics but non-economic factors are also very important. The latter also have their relative autonomy. The Marxian framework with these changes is known as neo-Marxian framework.

It must be noted that these frameworks are not specific to the unit of political analysis local, state or national levels. These could be applied to any unit - local, state or national politics. For the purpose of studying state politics, these could be called as the frameworks for the study of state politics. Their significance further increases for state politics as several aspects of politics are more visible in states. In fact, there are not uniform patterns of state politics. In this context, these frameworks assume special significance.

2.9 REFERENCES

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2.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Exercise 1

- 1) Systemic framework is used to explain state politics by taking into consideration political institutions and processes pertaining to state politics. It focuses on how a political system responds to changes taking place in a society. According to this framework a political system remains resilient by responding to changes in society.
- 2) Basic features of the Marxian framework include explaining politics in terms of class relations or in terms of social relations of production and forces of production. According to this framework politics is affected by the class relations in a society. There are two kinds of Marxian framework: Classical and Neo-Marxian. The classical framework suggests that economy plays a predominant role in determining politics. The Neo-Marxian framework suggests that non-economic factors, which include politics, are not absolutely determined by economic factors. They enjoy relative autonomy from the economic factors.

Check Your Exercise 2

- 1) The post-modernist frameworks give importance to various components of a political system, and the factors that influence politics. These factors include various identities such as caste, religion, ethnicity, language, etc. By focusing on such identities, the post-Modernist frameworks give enough recognition to them unlike the systemic and Marxian frameworks. As you have read in this unit, systemic and Marxian frameworks give more importance to a political system and class relations respectively rather than to identities.