

**Regionalism** is the expression of a common sense of identity and purpose by people within a specific geographical region, united by its unique language, culture, language, etc.

**In a positive sense**, it encourages people to develop a sense of brotherhood and oneness which seeks to protect the interests of a particular region and promotes the welfare and development of the state and its people.

**In the negative sense**, it implies excessive attachment to one's region which is a great threat to the unity and integrity of the country.

In the Indian context generally, the term 'regionalism' has been used in the negative sense.

### **History of Regional Movements in India**

- The history of regional movements in India can be traced back to the 1940s Dravida Movement or the Non-Brahmin movement that started in the present day Tamil Nadu.
- Later, the movement was resulted into the demand of a separate and independent Tamil state.
- This, in turn, led to several other parties like the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) springing up in the Andhra region, with the demands of separate statehood.
- The decades of 1950s and 1960s witnessed intense mass mobilisation, often taking on a violent character for the demands of statehood.
- In 1954, the revolt for the separate state of Andhra for Telugu - speaking people spearheaded by Potti Sri Ramulu and his eventual death triggered the wave of political regionalism in India with many princely states and other states making a demand for a separate state.

- This resulted in formation of the States Reorganisation Committee (headed by Faisal Ali) which recommended re-organisation of Indian states on linguistic lines, thus reinforcing the regionalist tendencies.
- With the enactment of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, linguistic states became a reality.
- During 1970s and 1980s, owing to the intensification of tribal insurgency for separation and statehood, the Union government passed the North-eastern States Reorganisation Act, 1971.
- It upgraded the Union Territories of Manipur and Tripura, and the Sub-State of Meghalaya to full statehood, and Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh (then Tribal Districts) to Union Territories which became states in 1986.
- The decade of 2000s, witnessed vigorous movements for the creation of separate states due to a rising sense of regional deprivation.
- It resulted in the formation of the three new states – Chhattisgarh out of Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand out of Bihar and Uttarakhand out of Uttar Pradesh.
- The latest addition to this is the state of Telangana created by the division of Andhra Pradesh in 2014.

## **Types of Regional Movements**

**Secessionism** is a form of regionalism that involves militant and fundamentalist groups advocating a separation from India on the basis of ethnicity or any other factor.

Isac Muivah's National Socialist Council of Nagaland, the Islamic fundamentalist groups in J&K, ULFA in Assam are examples of such an extreme dimension of regionalism.

**Separatism** is a demand for separate statehood within the Indian Union. Many times, linguistic or ethnic minorities within the states come together and unite against the majority community in that state.

This kind of sub-regionalism was validated by the State Reorganisation Act of 1956. The most recent examples include the formation of Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana.

Meanwhile, there have been many demands including the creation of Bodoland for the Bodo-speakers in Assam; Gorkhaland for ethnic Gorkha (Nepali) people in West Bengal; a Bundelkhand state (covering part of Madhya Pradesh and part of Uttar Pradesh) for promoting the development of the region.

**Demand for Full Statehood**, the union territories have been forwarding such demands like the NCT of Delhi.

Most of such demands have already been accepted. In 1971, Himachal Pradesh got the status of a full state and thereafter Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh (former NEFA) and Sikkim got full statehoods

**The Demand for Autonomy**, since 1960's, with the emergence of regional parties, the demand for state autonomy has been gaining more and more strength due to the central political interferences.

In Tamil Nadu the DMK, in Punjab the Akali Dal, in Andhra Pradesh the Telgu Desham, in Assam the Assam Gana Parishad, the National conference in J&K and in West Bengal the Forward Bloc have been continuously demanding a larger share of powers for the states.

**Demand for Regional Autonomy within a State**, in some of the states, people belonging to various regions have been demanding recognition of their regional identities.

The genesis of such demands lies in the regional imbalances resulting from inefficient planning for instance in J & K, the Ladakhis are demanding a regional status.