

National Seminar on 'Regions and the Centre: Emerging Dynamics of Federal India since the 1990s' (09-11 October, 2018)

Concept Note:

Contrary to popular belief that the rise of regional parties or regionalism in the Indian politics would lead to the weakening of the central government's power, it is observed that the growth of multiparty system and coalition politics, both at the centre and the states have not led to reduction of the power of centre over the states. The recent implementation of GST is an example of cooperative federalism but it is the centre which is the driving force in bringing out changes in tax regime by bringing both consuming and manufacturing states to a common table within the constitutional provision of fiscal distribution of power. Three most important developments have deeply shaped the working of the federal policy in India since the 1990s, marked by coalition politics. The new economic policy initiated since the 1990s, the consolidation of identity based regional politics, increasing cross border terrorism and naxal violence have deeply affected the centre-state relations. In recent years, climate change and its disaster risks have also emerged as another policy challenge which would inevitably shape the centre-state relations and the working of the federal polity. Interestingly, these larger political developments have led to the strengthening the power of the central government and assertion by the state governments.

Macro-economic reforms have been initiated by the Indian state since the 1990s. Of late, it is seen that the states are competing to invite the foreign and domestic capital. This brings into hitherto unexplored areas of examining the role of capital in shaping federalization and regionalization politics. It is broadly agreed that the facilitating role played by the Indian state in adopting pro-market and pro-business politics has not only changed the discourse of Indian politics but has also brought into focus the extraordinary influence of the business class in politics and governance. The role played by corporate class and the regionally influential capitalist farmers from dominant agrarian communities in agriculturally advanced regions in shaping the federal and regional politics and policy needs a critical discussion.

Political economy of development in India has shaped the politics of regionalism and federalization process widely. The states in India are at different level of Human Development Index representing the complex factors like colonial impact, the pattern of development politics, leadership, bureaucratic capacity, and mobilisation politics. Some states have emerged agriculturally and industrially prosperous than other states and play catalyst role in promoting foreign and domestic capital. These developments have inevitable impact on the leverage of the states in shaping the federal policy and their bargaining power. Regional inequalities and disparities in income and living standards across the regions have come to stay in India's political economy.

The cross-border terrorism and ethnic violence and the state response to them have been a source of interest to the scholars on internal security. The responsibility of the states and centre gets overlapped when it comes to the institutional mechanisms to respond to such challenges. The persistence of centrifugal forces across the Indian states based on ethnic and

class identities have constantly brought to focus the role of the state and central governments in responding to such political development within the federal structure. The emerging challenge of natural and man-made disasters, climate change vulnerability and sustainability issues and India's acceptance of international climate control obligations would inevitably shape India's political economy of development and policy strategies from macro to micro level. The preparedness of the states and centre in tackling the climate change induced vulnerabilities and their impact on the livelihood securities raise an important dimension to the unexplored federal and regional politics.

The consolidation of the regional parties across the country and their social support base raise a pertinent academic question whether these regional political forces articulate the interests of their states or confine their political strategies to attend to their narrow social support base. The rise of the regionally influential agrarian castes has been responded by politics of cooption by all regional and national level parties. The growth of patronage and populist politics and dominance of personality cult at the regional level have its impact in shaping the policy formulation at the national level. The three day national seminar focused hitherto unexplored but critical issues on the following themes.

1. The political economy of Indian federalism: continuities, changes and emerging trends since the 1990s,
2. Economic liberalization, coalition politics and the autonomy of politics at the centre and states,
3. Changing contours and contexts of centre-state disputes, emergence of inter-state and center-state disputes like sharing of inter-state river water, GST, mining royalty etc.,
4. Economic liberalization, the rise of regionally influential agrarian classes and the domestic and foreign capital in shaping the federal and regional politics,
5. The emerging trends of centre-state fiscal relations in the context GST regime,
6. Politics of populism and clientism in the Indian states, emergence of personality cults in the identity based regional politics and their impact on national/federal politics.
7. Relevance of inter-state comparisons as subject of comparative politics
8. Evolving challenges to national security, cross border terrorism, naxal violence and human security issues and the role and response of the states and central government,
9. The climate change and sustainability issues and their impact on the center-state relations and the development strategies.

A National seminar on '*Regions and the Centre: Emerging Dynamics of Federal India since the 1990s*' was organised at IAS during 09-11 October 2018. Dr. Pradeep Nayak, Former Fellow, IAS was the convener of the seminar. Professor Makarand R. Paranjape, Director, IAS, delivered the Welcome address. Dr. Pradeep Nayak, Convener of the seminar gave introductory remarks. The Keynote address was delivered by Professor Mahendra Prasad Singh, Formerly with Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, Delhi on '*Region*

and Centre: The Constitutional and Political Dynamics of Federal India'. Dr. Pradeep Nayak, convener of the seminar proposed the Vote of thanks.

Participants:

- Professor Ashutosh Kumar, Professor and Deputy Coordinator, UGC-CAS, Department of Political Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh.
- Professor Keshab Das, Gujarat Institute of Development Research, Ahmadabad.
- Professor Archana Upadhyay, Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.
- Dr. Pankaj Deep, Department of Political Science, School of Humanities and Social Science, Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida, UP.
- Professor Jagpal Singh, Professor of Political Science, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Madian Garhi, New Delhi.
- Dr. Anna V. Bochkovskaya, Visiting Professor in the Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.
- Dr. Joseph K Lalfakzuala, Assistant Professor, Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati.
- Dr. Anil Kumar Vaddiraju, Centre for Political Institutions, Governance and Development (CPIGD), Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bengaluru.
- Professor Sukhpal Singh, Centre for Management in Agriculture (CMA), Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmadabad, Gujarat.
- Dr. Mangesh D. Kulkarni, Department of Politics & Public Administration, Savitribai Phule, Pune University, Pune.
- Dr Vinny Jain, Associate Professor of Political Science, St. John's College, Agra.
- Dr. Himnshu Roy, Associate Professor of Political Science, DDU College, Delhi University
- Professor Pampa Mukherjee, Department of Political Science (Centre of Advanced Study), Punjab University, Chandigarh
- Dr. Sujit Kumar, Department of Political Science, Post-graduate and Research centre, St. Joseph's College, Bengaluru.
- Dr. Rinki Dahiya, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Shaheed Bhagat Singh College, University of Delhi, Delhi.
- Dr. Amit Upadhyay, Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Hyderabad.
- Dr. Gyanaranjan Swain, Department of Political Science, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack.
- Dr. Jagmeet Bawa, International Resource Centre– Universal Human Values in Education, IKG Punjab Technical University, Jalandhar – Kapurthala.
- Dr. Rajshree Dutta, Assistant Professor in Political Science, Department of Social Science, Fakir Mohan University, Balasore, Odisha.