

Regionalism

[UPSC Notes]

What is Regionalism?

Regionalism in this contemporary world can be explained as an insider-outsider concept in which loyalties to a region of origin are central. A regional movement has the same characteristics as an identity movement except that the demands have some special privileges. People who have been deprived or neglected for a long time tend to assert their regional identity as a remedy for states and their favorable policies toward them.

Geographical and social factors play a significant role in allowing regionalism to appear and enhance itself. But it should also be kept in mind that regionalism can be a result of various disputes and bitterness among the regions. For example, disputes related to river waters in India.

Types of Regionalism

More broadly, are three types of regionalism:

- **Supra-state regionalism:** Supra-state regionalism refers to the type of regionalism where a common interest is shared among the people residing in more than one state. Such a community works to promote the local agenda and regional autonomy. According to the concept of supra-state regionalism, one large state having common interests will have a better chance of success than multiple smaller states.
- **Inter-state regionalism:** Inter-state regionalism is a type of regionalism that creates differences among two or more states. The territorial component is contiguous with provincial territories and a juxtaposition of the identities of two or more states. This is also something that is discussed since it undermines the interests of some people.
- **Intra-state regionalism:** Interesting regionalism comes into the picture when one region or a state stands up to fight for its autonomy, self-identity, and self-reliance. But, since this type of regionalism forces a particular region to be self-dependent, it can be considered a good form of regionalism.

Types of Regional Movements

The regional moments that resulted from the regionalism can be subdivided into-

- **Secessionism:** It involves the fundamentalist groups advocating a separation or militants. Eg, Isac Muivah's National Socialist Council of Nagaland, the Islamic fundamentalist groups in J&K.
- **Separatism:** It demands a separate state. Eg, the formation of Telangana, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, etc.
- **Demand for Full Statehood:** This demand is accounted from the Union territories. For eg, NCT of Delhi. Such demands are mostly accepted. One such good example is Arunachal Pradesh (former NEFA) and Sikkim got full statehood.
- **The Demand for Autonomy:** It results from central political interference, because of which, it is gaining strength since the 1960s.
- **Demand for Regional Autonomy within a State:** In this, people of a particular region demand their recognition on the basis of their respective regional identities.

History of Regionalism in India

Regionalism in India finds its roots in colonial policies. The concept of regionalism evolved in India from the Difference in British attitude and treatment towards De residences developed regional East tendencies and princely states. Because of the differences, the British economic policies didn't give much importance to some regions and this resulted in Regional imbalance and economic disparities among them.

It was the time when the Indian national movement gave wings to the idea of pluralistic India. In 1940, the non-Brahmin movement or properly known as Dravida the moment has already begun because The independent Tamil state was created. Not only the state was created, but this moment also resulted in the creation of parties like the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) which demanded the separation of the Andhra region just like the Tamil state.

The wind for the Demand for different statehood resulted in violent mass in the decades the 1950s to 1960s. Defier for D separate states continued because of the political regionalism that happened because of the potty Sri Ramulu's eventual death.

This became a matter of concern and because of the increasing demands, the state reorganization committee was created. The committee was headed by Faiz Ali. The main idea behind the formation of the particular committee was to Properly reinforce the regional stick tendencies. It recommends the reorganization of the Indian states. The states reorganization act, of 1956 turned the idea of creating the linguistic states into reality.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Union government came up with the northeastern states reorganization act 1971 which dealt with the demands of the separation and statehood by the tribals.

Later in 1986, the status of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh were changed into states (prior, they were the union territories). However, the urge for regional deprivation was witnessed because of the idea of creating separate states in the 2000s.

India witnessed the formation of three new states from the existing ones that is Jharkhand from Bihar, Chhattisgarh from Madhya Pradesh, and lastly Uttarakhand from Uttar Pradesh. Recently, in 2014, Telangana was created as a separate state out of Andhra Pradesh.

Causes for Regionalism

Regionalism in India is a complex phenomenon because it consists of various factors like cultural, economic, geographical, historical, and psychological influences. Let's see them one by one.

- **Cultural and Historical:** This could be one of the most obvious causes of regionalism. The people belonging to a particular community of origin can have some glorious history and local heroes from which they derive inspiration, which leads to regionalism with another region or state.
- **Geographical** conditions can also prove to be the cause of regionalism as the territorial organization and geographical boundaries of a particular region are symbolic and the people living in that region also develop linguistic homogeneity among themselves.
- **Caste and Religion:** Even though India has grown significantly, caste and religion remain significant barriers to growth, as well as the primary causes of regionalism. Regionalism is, in fact, generally a secular phenomenon, and it crosses over into class and religious affiliations.

Effects of Regionalism in India

There are many effects of regionalism in India. Let's see what they are:

- It has led to the rise of new regional political parties, say the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) which demanded the separation of the Andhra region just like the Tamil state
- The upcoming new political parties can become a possible chance to refocus on certain regional problems.
- This regionalism sometimes leads to misunderstandings and violence among the classes that disturb the law and order of a particular region or maybe a state.
- Regionalism is not limited to specific regions or states within India's borders, but it also spreads internationally, as India-Sri Lanka relations remain tied due to domestic politics over the state of Tamilnadu.
- Regionalism, if considered good for a reason, can be bad, even worse, and cause a threat to national security too. For example, take the Kashmir issue.

Regionalism- a threat to the Integrity and National Unity

Regionalism is a real threat to the sovereignty of India. The country has witnessed some prime examples of negative regionalism. The anti-Bihari or anti-migrant issue of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), resulted in hatred because of which it opposes the employment or any kind of residence of non-state people.

The other example is from Punjab where regionalism has led to successionism because of which the state is witnessing the Khalistani terrorism growing there. Not only is it a threat to sovereignty, but it also possesses an effect on national integrity by promoting vote bank politics. Seeing the broader picture, regionalism in principle needs to be considered an antinational phenomenon. However, these regional moments had a good side as well as it has given exposure to the local emphases in the field of art and culture.

Difference between Regionalism and Regional Political Parties

Regional political parties that belong to a specific region or state are not required to be called regional parties. To put it simply, these parties do not adhere to a specific ideology. Any party that has its roots in a region can be considered a regional party, whereas a regionalist party advocates for independence and autonomy in its region.

Due to the limited number of votes and legislative seats received by the regional parties, they may join hands to form political coalitions or be a part of a coalition government. An example of the statement could be the coalition government formed in 1996 when two major political parties, Congress and BJP, worked together along with the regional parties to form the government.