

## NATIONAL INTEGRATION—ROLE OF ADMINISTRATION

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In a country like ours which is inhabited by people with markedly varying cultural, social, regional, lingual background, values and economic status, national integration assumes significant importance. In fact, it is a measure of our overall growth as well as the very survival of the Union as a whole. The issues involved in the problem of national integration have long been talked about and debated on various occasions by every section of our society. In view of the recent happenings, in different parts of the country, which are endangering the national solidarity and threatening the very fabric of our society, national integration has assumed greater paramourty.

This paper purports to examine the nature and extend of malintegration, the 'stresses' and 'strains' involved in the process of ethnic harmony and the administrative mechanism to achieve national integration.

### THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Owing to the mixed character of Indian people, there are bound to be social differences, ethnic and cultural variations, political discord, economic rivalries and some antagonism. People tend to pursue their interests by forming groups and selecting identifications that maximise their advantage in the competition for scare jobs and economic resources and for political power (Paul Brass, 1981). Their operation in the socio-economic life of the nation generate an area of conflict and disharmony. Sometimes the struggles cause widespread violence or serious and costly disorder. At times it assumes militancy and extremism. Such incidents become the sources of political instability and menace to peace and

economic development. In such a situation national integration must aim at the processes of incorporating various parts of the society into a functioning whole towards the reduction of barriers between various parts of the whole, the opening of communications and ultimately the tolerance of differences within the unity, the emergence of faith in political system and the emergence of shared values and perspectives or consensus (Myron Weiner, 1967).

Social scientists have been debating on five different approaches to integration (Reuven Kahane, 1982). The first defines integration or solidarity as being based on a division of labour and therefore, on different kinds of functional, horizontal patterns of interdependence. The second is the theory of dependency, a modern version of the Marxist approach, according to which integration follows a vertical pattern in which powerful party exploits and controls weak groups or countries. A third approach views integration as a statistical average of the strengths of different groups, based on the amount of kind of resources—power, wealth and prestige—they hold. The fourth, a pluralistic approach, measures integration according to the degree of overlapping group membership. It is assumed that the larger the overlap, the greater the solidarity. A fifth approach defines integration in terms of the number and severity of conflicts among different social sectors. One would like to have a departure from these approaches if one is required to examine the role of administration in national integration. National integration is being referred to in this paper as the capacity of administration to use its mechanism in dealing with or coping with potential or existing frustration, conflicts and deprivation. This approach is based on the fact that in India antagonism is to be viewed as a source of change rather than instability. It is a method of protest against the old orthodox social and economic institutions. In India, the centrifugal trends can be countered by modernising her social institutions and developing economically. The administrative system must develop mechanism which can manage effectively these conflicts and prevent its frequent occurrences are those assuming serious dimensions.

## NATURE AND EXTENT OF MALINTEGRATION

The forces of disintegration in operation presently are to some extent the legacy of British rule in India. The policy of divide and rule, thrived on our feudal regionalism, artificially induced sources of tension in our society. However, the struggle against British rule unified our people not withstanding their differences for the common goal of freedom from foreign rule. Even after Chinese aggression, it was felt that country has largely achieved national integration. Barring this brief period, it is unfortunate that during all these years in post-independence period communal riots, violence based on caste, atrocities on Harijans and disturbances based on language, culture and regionalism and economic disparities continue to be almost an everyday occurrence in India. It must be stressed that neither the 'majority' community nor the 'minority' community are well-knit and homogeneous. They are divided socially, politically and economically. As such disintegration must not be interpreted nearly on the basis of 'majority-minority' conflict. It is to be viewed largely in terms of local situations and economic factors. In such situations local administration is directly and intimately involved. A number of studies conducted on caste and communal violence clearly demonstrate that language, religion, caste and political splits are really not the major causes of malintegration. The real courses are the economic aspects like, scarcity and deprivation and class division coupled with rural-urban gap and regional disparities. In many cases the divisions in terms of language, religion and caste are accentuated when combined with socio-economic interests.

Most of the conflicts are acquiring greater ferocity in the background of depending economic debacle in the country. The brutal offences against pavement dwellers in urban areas and ferocious attack against poor peasants and landless are increasing. Many of the riots are being financed by the richer section of society. The religious feelings are exploited for narrow economic and vested interests. The communal riots are not restricted to Hindu-Muslim conflicts, but owing to religious dogmas and belief, riots, between other communi-

ties and intra-communities can also be witnessed. It is a matter of concern and regret that some political parties in India seem to have developed a deep-rooted vested interest in encouraging and creating conflicts for the sake of their stronghold on their followers.

While communal violence is largely an urban phenomenon, the atrocities on Harijans and other lower and backward castes are taking place on a large scale in rural areas. They are humiliated and debarred from exercising their right of franchise. Some of these crimes are committed on account of envy of the caste-Hindus for various welfare measures adopted by the government. Disputes arising out of non-payment of wages and forcible eviction from their land and house-sites are increasing.

Extremists violence is showing an upward trend. Apart from Punjab, Chandigarh and Delhi the states of West Bengal, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu had not been free from incidents of extremists violence. It is reported that the All India Sikh Students Federation, the Dal Khalsa and the National Council of Khalistan have been engaged in the secessionist and communal activities. There are reported to be large scale anti-national activities in the Kashmir Valley. The situation in the north-east are also adding the process of disintegration. The activities of the Naga undergrounds, belonging to Burma based National Socialist Council of Nagaland, and conflict between armed police of Assam and Nagaland, insurgency situation as created by the activities of Tripura National Volunteers and the unlawful activities of MNF in Mizoram are the forces which are leading to the process of disintegration.

#### INTEGRATION OF TRIBES

In the variegated pattern of the Indian scene are the numerous tribes, more than 200 in number, some of them living in the most primitive stage of development. Since the struggle for freedom left them unaffected, the task of their integration is the most difficult of all. Despite a large number of developmental programme they are being economically exploited and culturally neglected. Such ethnic groups,

therefore, at times develop a hostility not merely towards their economic oppressors but to the 'alien' culture.

In the name of patronising the culture of minority groups, the imperialist power through various religious organisations are breeding a secessionist tendency among these ethnic groups. The imperialists have a plan to isolate the north-eastern India from the rest of the country. Some of the neighbouring countries are providing arms and even training the extremists in their own countries. As a result, the democratic movement of the minority ethnic groups are turned into a suicidal move to secede from the country.

It is, therefore, of utmost importance that administration must keep a vigilance over all such activities. The tribal population needs regional autonomy to develop themselves economically and culturally without any interference. Owing to the absence of regional autonomy they become weaker and more vulnerable to secessionism and exclusiveness. The political and administrative decentralisation are the steps which go to strengthen their democratic unity.

#### LINGUISTIC FANATICISM

Though the states of India were re-organised on the basis of language, the people speaking other languages are free by their Constitutional rights to settle in any part of the country. But the linguistic fanaticism and narrow vested interests of the local inhabitants, equal status to settlers from other regions are being denied. Unfortunately, a cry is being raised that the states are meant for only the 'sons of the soils'. Such slogans are raised to put forward exclusive claims over assets and resources of the state and public employment. The self-seeking leaders misguide their local residents to treat outsider as their enemies. This creates tensions within the same working, labour and trading class. Since majority of the state functionaries belong to the same region, they not only are sympathetic to their demands but continue to provide all types of help in getting their demands accepted even through agitation. The administration in such cases, to a limited extent, become one of the sources of disintegration.

## REGIONALISM AND ECONOMIC BACKWARDNESS

The problem of national integration is not just a social problem of achieving a changed pattern of thought and behaviour of different peoples of India. It is mainly an economic problem of removing the obstacles in the path of the development of the people so that they can advance according to their own genius and culture. Uneven economic development of the different regions of India is not seriously disputed by any one. No wonder there are strains and tensions between different regions and competition and jealousy between states regarding priorities in the matter of new projects and industries. The strained relations between Centre and some of the states in India is affecting the national unity. In the name of national integration Centre is becoming strong. The genuine grievances of the backward and undeveloped states are being dubbed as 'regionalism'. The only way of integration is to gradually remove these disparities and to grant greater regional autonomy.

The economic backwardness offer fertile soil for the imperialists to hatch their plans to start secessionist agitation. The economically backward group of people, unemployed and frustrated youth often become the tools to serve their narrow class interests.

## ADMINISTRATIVE MECHANISM

The review of official and unofficial reports and other literature reveals that there are four recommended approaches to the national integration in India, namely, (i) Gradually harmonious change; (ii) Mechanical Solidarity-assimilation; (iii) Unity in diversity—a pluralist approach; and (iv) Protective discrimination.

Since different groups of people pursue their interests that maximise their advantage in the competition for scarce jobs and economic resources, the role of administration is to effectively mediate between the conflicting groups and maintain an order and balance in the system. It is accepted to curtail and control the forces of disintegration, rationally and objectively; implement various socio-economic programmes

so that it leads to socio-economic justice and reduce inequalities; and take adequate steps to promote harmony among different ethnic groups. Various studies in this context have revealed that the administration has failed, to a large extent, in fulfilling this accepted role. Various administration functionaries also identify with their respective ethnic groups and start working for their solidarity and material advantages.

#### STRENGTHENING LAW AND ORDER MACHINERY

The judicial enquiries into a number of communal and caste riots have revealed that the State and district administrative machinery took an attitude of either of total indifference or a lukewarm one. Local administration neither did protect the interests of aggrieved parties nor redress their grievances. In certain cases they were seen even in the role of instigator and in few cases that of participator. There are press reports which indicate that atrocities, including rape, on the Harijans and Adivasis are being conducted by police constables. They are also indulging in loot, arson and killing. Every riot adds to the feeling of insecurity in the minority groups. They feel that the police and administration do not protect them. They are unwilling to employ all the administrative measures available to them. The communal and upper-rich cast Hindus are given free hand to propagate further hatred.

The hardship faced by the victims of atrocities need administrative and financial help to re-start their life. The reports of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes reveal that the scale of relief is generally low and inadequate to compensate their loss. Generally, there is inordinate delay in sanctioning relief to the aggrieved persons. They are further harassed and tortured by the local administration.

The administration apparently believe in only two kinds of control, viz., curfew and large arrests; each method is best with its own limitations. Curfew results in large scale hardship. It sharpens the anger of the entire community and focuses it against the police. Large scale arrests tend to be

arbitrary and often leads to arrest of innocent persons. The democratic rights, a biggest security to minority, are curtailed and denied.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, a nodal Ministry, keeps a watch on the trends and development of disintegrative forces in the country. It has been issuing guidelines to the state governments in curbing anti-national activities, prevention of smuggling of illegal arms, infiltration across the border, strengthening of police organisation and general administration. Despite all this the minorities are still being alienated and disintegrated forces have not been curtailed.

It will not be out of place to mention that some of the Western scholars (Harrison and Moore) have pointed out that India as composed of such diversities and antagonism that it cannot remain an integrated society in the long run without adopting a regimented authoritarian regime. The administration seems to be guided by this philosophy. This is certainly not a solution to the problem of disintegration. The administration must counter the centrifugal trends by modernising police administration; deploying additional manpower; creation of special cells in sensitive district for intelligence work and analysis of facts leading to unsocial activities, anti-national propaganda and economic tensions. The inflammatory rumours should be contradicted immediately. There is a need for redefining the role of Magistracy and police officer. Special training programmes may be arranged for district officials so that along with punitive measures they are able to perform preventive and promotional activities leading to national integration. Values like tolerance, morality, objectivity and rationality should be inculcated in them. Officers with proven ability and confidence should be posted in sensitive areas. There is an urgent need to boost up the morale of police officials. They should be encouraged to travel widely in the country and mix up with the employees of different community and castes.

#### PROTECTIVE DISCRIMINATION

India, in her Constitution and in subsequent legislative measures and administrative decisions duly confirmed by court



rulings, has established a policy of "protective discrimination" or what can also be called as 'preferential policies'. On the basis of such policies concession, preference and reservation in legislative bodies, public employment and admission to educational institutions are made available to individuals on the basis of membership of a group. It was thought that such policies would reduce the gap separating the well-being of one ethnic group from another. Such policies have led to controversies regarding the quantum and types of preferences as well as about the entitlement. In addition, most states have extended such preferences to residents of the states. Preferences are being extended to 'promotion' in public services. According to the report of the Commissioner of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, these policies are not being properly implemented. A number of studies suggest that these policies have benefited only a small segment of these communities. It is producing a new middle class within the backward community. Such policies intensify the militancy and further strengthen the group identity. The recent happenings, in Gujarat have created further heart-burning and disharmony among different communities. Senior officials of the state have been demonstrating against the police of reservation and the roster system. However, this must be realised that in a hierarchical society based on inequalities, such policies are the only positive ways to reduce socio-economic inequalities. However, it is essential that such policies are effectively administered so that its benefits really go to the deserving weaker section of the society. The policy should be implemented in such a way that it leads to equality of results. This also requires a new orientation, inculcation of values of secularism, tolerance, objectivity and rationality in public services. There is a need to bring about revolution in the minds of our public servants.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE UNIFICATION AND THE INSTITUTION OF ALL-INDIA SERVICES

The founding father of our Constitution chose to give the country a strong Centre to reconcile and conflicting claims of

'national sovereignty' and 'state sovereignty'. The concept of strong Centre is well enshrined under various provisions dealing with unified judicial, administrative and financial set up. In the name of national solidarity and uniformity of standard of administrative efficiency, the working of our federal system has resulted into serious imbalances and strained Centre-state relations. Such an administrative arrangement is neither conducive to national integration nor to planned and balanced socio-economic development.

The Constitution of India not only retained the two old services in the form of Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service, it also provided for the establishment of All India Services in other spheres. It was felt that the all-India composition of the services with personnel drawn from all the states would create unity in India and help national integration. Every state gets a number of senior officers from outside whose vision and outlook transcend local horizons. It was also felt that judicious and independent advice can more easily be expected of officers of an All India Service than from those locally recruited and controlled. This helps the officers to fulfill their responsibilities without succumbing to stresses and strains of local influences. The system of deputation to the Centre helps bringing coordination between Centre and states. Since the creation of these All India Services, the Indian scene has changed in many ways. There is a demand for greater share of the 'state services' in these All India Services. The principle that about 50 per cent of the new direct entrants in any cadre of All India Service should be from outside the state is not being adhered to rigidly.

The Council of States have passed Bills for the creation of other All India Services in field of health, education, agriculture and engineering. The State Re-organisation Commission also recommended the creation of such services. The proposals have not received the required ratification by half of the Indian States. Many of the States do not favour posting of 'outsiders' on certain important administrative positions. Some of the officers had been harassed by the local or the State leaders.

Many of the officers are either succumbing to local influences or having a conflict with local politicians. With

growing demand for the policy of 'sons of soil', outsiders are not being welcomed. The principle of 'deputation' is also not being rigidly enforced. All this has created a doubt in the minds of many regarding the need and utility of all-India services. It is eroding the state autonomy and is being treated as hinderance to the implementation of progressive socio-economic policies.

#### OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE DEVICES

Education plays a vital role in promoting emotional integration. Steps, like holding youth camps, screening of films, organisation of exhibition, etc., are being taken to develop all aspects of student's personality. Community signing is also aimed at promoting national integration. Education policy must aim at not only inculcating scientific temperament, it must develop a sense of tolerance and feeling of oneness and nationalism in students. It is hoped that the new education policy would make provisions for such aspects. National integration has to grow silently in the minds and hearts of the people.

Centralised socio-economic planning, the process of decision-making and the manner and extent of Central involvement in state subjects have created new tensions in the Centre-state relationships. The pressures and pulls of the states for locating Central public sector enterprises are a prominent and well known example of it. There is a need for a more effective use of National Development Council. Not only this, a meaningful consultation with the states at different levels is essential at every subsequent stage in the framing of the detailed plan. There is financial domination of the Centre which operates in various ways. There is a need for decentralised planning along with a well developed system of information feedback to the Centre so that major deviations from essential priorities or substantial shortfalls in performance can come to the notice promptly and remedial measures can be adopted in time to be effective for the future.

There is a need to strengthen the Zonal Councils for solving inter-state disputes and to strengthen the cooperation

among states. The national solidarity can be achieved by introducing a federal system where the separate entities of region having different cultures are accepted and their democratic structure is protected. Further, it is essential that the steps are taken carefully about introduction of official language in our administrative system without reducing the importance and status of regional languages.

In October, 1961, National Integration Conference was held. The conference decided to set up a National Integration Council to review all matters pertaining to national integration and to make recommendations thereon. The Council is a broad based, consisting of the Prime Minister (Chairman), Union Home Minister, Chief Ministers of all States, Educationists, Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Chairman of University Grants Commission and few leaders of different political parties. Council have met only four times, *i.e.*, in June 1962, June 1968, November 1980 and January 1984. There is a need for its frequent meetings and to reconstitute the council giving wider representation to organisation of workers, peasants, women, youth and the press. Since national integration can be achieved more through promotional activities rather than through authoritative administrative system, it is essential that these representatives take up the responsibility of promoting national integration in their own sphere of activities. They must work for gradual harmonious socio-economic changes. Voluntary organisations should be administratively and financially supported to do the promotional work.

#### CONCLUSION

The problem of national integration is the problem of reconciling the diversities with overall national solidarity and allowing the ethnic groups to play their legitimate role, modifying some of the old socio-economic institutions and removing others for achieving a socialist secular-democratic society.

In this context, the Constitution of India provides a basic framework and the legislature sustains the unity of our country by devising legislative measures to bring about socio-

economic revolution. In such an endeavour judiciary must help the process of unifying the country by judicious and enlightened exercise of judicial power, the education system must act as an instrument of social change.

All this is not possible without strengthening our administrative machinery and inculcating new values among our administrators. The foregoing discussion clearly demonstrates that there is a need for a comprehensive programme. Piece-meals reforms do not go a long way in achieving national integration. There is a need for an administrative machinery which has a well defined and clearly conceived policies.

Along with the punitive and preventive steps, administration must help in promoting national integration. It must protect and safeguard the rights and interests of minorities. It must implement policies objectively and rationally so that there is a social order and economic development.

It is hoped that the above mentioned structural, procedural and behavioural changes will help in achieving national integration.

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