Policy and Politics behind Creation of New States in India

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ABSTRACT: This research paper indicates that it is not the case that social movement’s fall neatly into identity- or interest- based categories. Instead, some movements are encouraged to foreground identity claims as a result of the broader political context in which they operate. Instead, the questioning of borders took place in the course of the processing of social movement demands in local politics. As the world’s largest multi-ethnic democracy, India has a federal Constitution that is well-equipped with administrative devices that offer apparent recognition and measures of self-governance to territorially concentrated ethnic groups. This article analyzes how demands for political autonomy—or statehood—within the federal system have been used as a frame for social movement mobilization. It focuses on the most recent states to have been created in India: Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand, which came into being in 2000.

Keywords: India; statehood; movements; political parties; federalism

INTRODUCTION:
This research focuses on one part of the ever complex field of popular Politics and resistance. It examines how, why and with what consequences some social movements in India have drawn on regional identity frames in electoral politics and demanded political autonomy in the form of statehood within the federal system. Explanations for the creation of India’s newest states, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand in 2000, often draw implicitly on the idea that state formation reflects the successful mobilization of identity frames by social movements, in the context of a multi-ethnic federal system that provides institutional recognition of the country’s diversity. The dominant shorthand narrative about the formation of these new states can be summarized as the view that they were formed to better represent tribal or hill-dwelling communities, whose interests had been expressed by long-running regional social movements. Ramachandra Guha, for instance, expresses a commonly offered opinion when he states that: “Official acknowledgement of the history of adivasi suffering came through the creation of two states of the Union named Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Also formed was the state of Uttaranchal,1 from the hill districts of Uttar Pradesh, likewise rich in natural resources and likewise subject to exploitation by powerful external interests.” (Guha Ramachandra, 2007) Alternatively, TK Oommen makes a direct link between social movement mobilization and the achievement of statehood when he suggests that “faced with the irresistible force of mobilization the Jharkhand state was finally formed in the year 2000.” (Oommen T.K., 2007)

There are many reasons why the poor and vulnerable may not obtain the full attention of politicians even in a democracy where they have numerical strength. These groups are typically poorly informed and are generally less inclined to vote than richer and better educated citizens. A key question then is what institutions and mechanisms enable vulnerable citizens to have their preferences represented in policy. It is important that they have enough electoral power to “swing” outcomes if politicians are to be responsive to their demands. This is more likely to be true when electoral turnout is high and political competition is intense.2 Mass media can play a key role by enabling vulnerable citizens to monitor the actions of incumbents and to use this information in their voting decisions.

POLICY AND POLITICS BEHIND CREATION OF NEW STATES
In the 1950s, India’s States Reorganization Commission, established by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, suggested that administration would be easier if the country could be divided into states based on languages (of which India has well over 400). Based on the recommendations of that commission, several linguistic entities were carved out: Kerala (for Malayalam speakers), Karnataka (for speakers of Kanada), Maharashtra (for Marathi speakers) and Gujarat (for those who had Gujarati as a mother tongue). (Economic and Political Weekly)

The pro-Telangana movement draws most of its support from those who feel that the area has been economically neglected by New Delhi and by the state government of Andhra Pradesh; it was galvanized by a 2009 hunger strike by K. Chandrasekhar Rao, chief of the separatist Telangana Rashtra Samithi party. But the more recent catalyst for the formation of India’s 29th state is more calculated. After dragging its feet on
the issue for years, simple electioneering appears to be the reason for New Delhi’s sudden approval of the creation of Telangana, over the loud protests of the rest of Andhra Pradesh (previously, parent-state approval was a condition for the secession of a region as a separate entity). The mathematics is plain. A Congress Party beset by corruption scandals and blamed for a slowing economy has noticed that almost half of Andhra Pradesh’s 42 parliamentary seats lie in what is now Telangana. Giving in to separatist demands and tying up with Rao’s party holds the promise of those seats being delivered in general elections slated for 2014. (http://world.time.com)

Reaction to the creation of India’s newest state has been swift and harsh. Twelve Congress Party legislators resigned in protest in Andhra Pradesh, which has been crippled by protests and strikes opposing the Telagana secession. Elsewhere in the country, other separatist movements felt emboldened to intensify their statehood demands. The Gorkha Janmukti Morcha party, which is demanding an ethnically Nepali Gorkhaland to be carved out of West Bengal, called for a 72-hour shutdown of Darjeeling. It resembled a ghost town on Monday with deserted roads being patrolled by Indian troops. The country’s famed social activist Anna Hazare has said that the Telangana precedent will “weaken” the country. “It will spur and further intensify the demands for new states,” ((http://world.time.com) says Sanjeer Alam, an associate fellow at the Delhi-based Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. “Since the political class does not have a well-thought-out policy to take on the demands for new states, the country is bound to see chaos, violence and a situation of anarchy

CRITICISM BEHIND CREATION OF STATES IN INDIA

Critics argue that small states are more dependent on the central government and, in seeking to attract investment, become more vulnerable to the depredations of large corporations and even organized crime. Ashutosh Kumar, professor of Indian politics at Panjab University, says that “the bigger worry” is not the threat to national integrity so much as the inability of smaller states to withstand corroding forces. “Telangana is a hotbed of Maoist insurgency,” he points out. “As a smaller state would it be able to handle the insurgency as effectively?” (http://world.time.com)

Further redrawing of the federal map appears inevitable; however, as New Delhi grasps for ways to ease the pressures of administering what will be, by 2028, the world’s most populous nation. (India’s 1.2 billion people are organized into only 28 states — compare that to the U.S., a country of 300 million, which has 50 states.) But “it will pay off” only if the creation of smaller states increases administrative efficiency and [if it] reduces the distance between the administration and the people,” says Alam. “It will work only if it contributes to better governance, better power sharing and fulfills the aspirations of a long-neglected and relatively deprived section of the population.” (http://world.time.com) These are tall orders in India. If they are not fulfilled, the country’s separatists had better be careful of what they wish for Read more: India’s Newest State, Telangana, Is Born Out of Political Calculation Recent issue of telanga The recent Telangana movement was based on misrepresented facts to instigate hatred among regions by separatist political leaders. They are very much successful in it by following an organized way of involving a university professor etc as common people believe in educated. This resulted in poor and innocent students getting emotional and developing hatred and often destroying and vandalizing public and private property. Under the cover of this movement, the TRS chief and his family members (he, his son, his daughter, his son-in-law) became successful politicians riding on the sentiment. They often resort to illegal activities of harassing any one in Hyderabad if they are against their party and they vandalize such persons house and business and other properties. They are known for collecting illegal cash by threatenting to harm businesses in Hyderabad.

They often say that the movement is more than 50 years old, but to my knowledge the old movement was settled and everything was calm and peaceful until 2001. The TRS politicians are successful in making every one believe that it is a 60 year old issue. For that matter no one who participated in the old movement was involved in the current movement started by unemployed politicians.

TV channels encouraged the hatred by conducting hate discussions from among the people and have played a role which they are not supposed to play. Today with the result of this all people who are very friendly until 2001 are fighting each other.

Telangana is not undeveloped as is being projected; in fact 4 to 5 districts out of 10 are most developed than any other district in Andhra Pradesh. At the same time there are some districts which are under developed mostly due to arid terrain as it is geographically a plateau with less scope for providing water resources. There are districts in the other two regions which are backward than these backward districts in Telangana.

The other two regions Rayalaseema (the most backward region on any parameter - even Telangana people would agree) and Coastal Andhra are against division as they lose local status in Hyderabad which is capital for 6 decades. Almost all people go to Hyderabad after studies as almost all PSUs, Universities, IT, Pharma and all other private companies were setup there as it was the capital city. As all the development is done in
Hyderabad only (which is in Telangana, so obviously Telangana is most developed contrary to the Telangana politicians claims) these people cannot afford to lose it, but Telangana people want the two other regions people to leave the Hyderabad city for them.

The Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra people have a reason to claim for Hyderabad, as it was developed with all three regions people’s efforts, taxes and time for 6 decades. Leaving Hyderabad to Telangana will deprive them of almost all study and career opportunities. For example all the IIT, NIT, HCU, central PSUs, IT and Parma companies are infect in Hyderabad which is in Telangana region, all these were setup there as it is joint capital for 6 decades and not just only for Telangana people. Also, it is not fair to deprive 60% people of their 60 years effort just for the sake of 40% people’s wish for separation as the Hyderabad is in their region.

This can be summarized in this simple story. There are three brothers Telangana, Rayalaseema and Andhra. They have a house with three rooms. All the three worked for 6 decades collectively and put their earnings in Telangana brother’s room. Now the Telangana brother wants other two brothers to leave his room for him and asks others to separate and live on their own.

CONCLUSION

This article has shown how the intersection of movement and party politics helped to shape the goals and strategies adopted by social activists in Jharkhand and Uttarakhand. Bringing a demand for new states to pre-eminence. Through a discussion of some of India’s most iconic social movements, the article makes it clear that we must pay attention to such interactions when thinking about the spaces for, and possibility of, an autonomous field of subaltern politics. These themes have been taken up not to diminish the agency of the marginalized but to argue that any account of the politics of marginality must take account of the interrelationships between institutionalized and non-institutionalized politics.

The narratives presented in this paper stop short of the actual moment of state creation because the aim has been to demonstrate the nature of the coalitions that developed locally in support of statehood as a result of interactions between social movements and political parties. The explanations for the final act of state creation in the year 2000 lie at other levels of the federal system.48 The compromises involved in the emergence of broad pro-statehood coalitions suggest that seeking statehood within the federation—questioning borders—may not be a reliable route to creating new pro-poor regimes. In an argument developed further elsewhere, I have suggested that one of the reasons for the emergence of political consensus around particular regional identities was an attempt by some political parties to depoliticize ethnic cleavages and/or unsettle an attempt by social movements to associate a regional political identity with an emancipator politics of particular marginalized communities.49 Rather than representing a moment at which political regimes with new, more inclusive social bases were constituted, such developments meant that the process of state formation See Emma Mawdsley, “Uttarakhand agitation and Other Backward Classes,” Economic and Political. (Economic and Political Weekly)

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