

THE WEAKENING OF SUB-REGIONALISM IN INDIA: A CASE STUDY OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “THE WEAKENING OF SUB-REGIONALISM IN INDIA:A CASE STUDY OF HIMACHAL PRADESH” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of **Master of Philosophy** has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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Abbreviations

Sr. No.	Abbreviation	Expanded form
1	BJP	Bhartiya Janata Party
2	BJS	Bhartiya Jan Sangh
3	BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
4	CM	Chief Minister
5	CUHP	Central University Himachal Pradesh
6	HEP	Hydro-Electric Project
7	HIPA	Himachal Pradesh Institute of Public Administration
8	HLM	Him Loktantrik Morcha
9	HLP	Himachal Lokhit Party
10	HP	Himachal Pradesh
11	HPBOSE	Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education
12	HPPSC	Himachal Pradesh Public Service Commission
13	HPSSSB	Himachal Pradesh Subordinate Service Selection Commission
14	HSP	Himachal Swabhiman Party
15	INC	Indian National Congress
16	JVP	Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya
17	LM	Loktantrik Morcha
18	LPG	Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation
19	MSP	Minimum Support Price
20	NIT	National Institute of Technology
21	PGI	Post Graduate of India
22	SC	Scheduled Caste
23	SRC	State Reorganisation Commission
24	UT	Union Territory

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Glossary

•**Soberization-** By soberization we mean a process experienced by sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh in which the usually vocal, dense and fairly influential sub-regionalism of the period from about 1980 to the end of the 20th century has become less-heard of, subdued, sparse and negligibly influential by this time. Thus, soberization is equivalent to weakening.

•**Upper and lower Himachal-** This study shall more frequently employ the category of lower and upper areas instead of using the category of old and new Himachal. This is useful as it can be equated with the category of horticulture and agriculture belt respectively which the category of old and new Himachal sometimes makes difficult. This vocabulary is more geography-dependant than the category of old and new which is more of a history-dependent. Districts of Shimla, Kinnor, Sirmaur and Solan fall in the Upper Himachal and districts of Una, Kangrah, Hamirpur and some parts of Chamba fall in the Lower Himachal.

•**Sub-regionalism-** Here sub-regionalism is the phenomenon wherein people conduct their business in different walks of life, especially politics and economy, by making their sub-region as an overarching element for commission and omissions of certain acts, demands, etc.

•**Structural specifications of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh-** The structural peculiarities that render the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh a distinct identity. Some of these were absence of a movement based character, absence of glaring geographical and social differences etc.

•**Linguistic constructs-** This phrase signifies the nouns, characterizations, names, etc. used by the people of lower and upper Himachal Pradesh for each other.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Abstract

This chapter is divided into two broad parts. First part provides a general treatment of the theme of regionalism in India and the second part concerns with the particular case of regionalism within Himachal Pradesh. The first part starts with a discussion of the various difficulties that one faces while attempting a comprehensive understanding of the concept of regionalism and it is followed by some useful definitions. Then the three perspectives on the origin of regionalism in India-externalist, internalist and eclectic-are provided. An overview of regionalism in post-colonial India begins with an introduction of the debate between the optimists and doomsayers on the issue of the future of India and it ends by providing a chronological sketch of the process through which different states and Union Territories of India came into being. A typography of regionalism is discussed under the three heads of demands for separate states, demand for greater autonomy from the Centre and autonomy within a state. The first part concludes by noting two recent trends in regionalism in India-less suspicious outlook of the state towards regional movements and the increasing importance of sub-regions. The second part unfolds with a general discussion on the three sub-regions of Himachal Pradesh. Review of the literature on the theme of sub-regionalism in the state is provided along with the research gap. The survey of literature establishes that the causes for the weakening of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh has not been researched upon, and this constitutes the central question of the study. Discussions of the significance of the study, its limitations, research questions and a peep into rest of the chapters brings the chapter to its completion.

I

1. Introduction

Regionalism has been one of the most important factors in Indian politics. In spite of this sort of omnipresent status of this concept and phenomenon, its definition and meaning has not been evolved to the position that all could agree with it. In this sense, it remains an essentially contested concept.¹

The difficulty and the confusion over the meaning and conceptualization of regionalism emerges from multiple sources. First, its antecedent concept of region on which it builds itself also lacks any objective definition and usage,² i.e., region means different things to different people. For some it is a geographical expression and for others it is a social one. Some define it as a historic entity and yet others project it as a social construct which keeps evolving. Giving this difficulty in defining the term of region in social sciences, it is but natural that any term that expands on it is likely to experience more or less the same limitations. Second, the term is employed on various levels in a vertical world. Vertical world here means the world viewed as a vertical formation. In this vertical formation, sub-national, national, supra-national, international and global are some important labels and signify different levels. Depending on the context, one finds that the word region is deployed to almost all the levels of this vertical world. For example, if the context is of world politics, then we would encounter the term being used for grouping of countries. If the context is shifted to the national politics, the same term would be utilized to explain various parts of a nation-state. Further, we can witness the same term being used even for the parts of a region within a nation-state. This means that it is a relative term and its connotations alter according to the context in which

¹ Essentially contested concepts are those concepts usage of which results into endless disputes among the users of the concepts. W. B. Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56 (1955-56): 167-198.

² John A. Agnew, "Arguing with Regions." *Regional Studies* 47, no. 1 (2012): 6-17.

it is used. Third, the difficulty of clearly expounding the word regionalism is compounded with the fact that it sometimes connotes a desire of complete break away from a nation-state and sometimes a greater recognition within the nation-state.³ Though the term secessionism is sometimes employed for the former; still the term regionalism is usually used for the both.

Notwithstanding such complications being attached with the concept of regionalism, scholars have evolved some helpful definitions of the same. Defining region serves as the starting point for defining regionalism.

Rupert Vance evolved a simple but an inclusive definition of region. For him "region is "a homogeneous area with physical and cultural characteristics distinct from those of neighboring areas".⁴ In order to explain the meaning of regionalism in India, Sunil Datye tells us "There are three major variations of regionalism in India. The supra-state variety of regionalism covers a group of people spread over more than one state. In the second type, the boundaries of a region are coterminous with that of a state, and puts one or more states against each other on specific issues creating tensions between them. This type is identified as inter-state regionalism. The third type of regionalism is identified as intra-state regionalism. It embodies the quest of a part within a state for self-identity and self-development in positive terms and negatively speaking reflects a psyche of deprivation and/or exploitation of a part in relation to other parts of the same state".⁵

For Aijaz Ashraf Wani, "regionalism/subregionalism encompasses geo-historical, geo-physical, psychological, socio-cultural, and politico-economical components, as all

³ For example, Telangana movement and Naga movement both are put under the all encompassing head of regionalism.

⁴ Quoted in Kennethj Anda, "How well does 'region' explain political party characteristics?" *Political Geography* 2, no. 3 (1983): 179-203.

⁵ Sunil Datye, "Marathwada Sub-regionalism: A factor in Maharashtra Politics." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (1987): 512-525.

these variables together result in its growth."⁶ He further adds "regionalism connotes a quest for self-identity and self-fulfillment on the part of a particular region vis- a-vis overall national development".⁷ M. P Dube while explaining the meaning of regionalism writes "people living in a particular region over a period of time develop an identity affiliation with it. This identity affiliation is generally the resultant of spatial and temporal factors. Religion, language, ethnicity, a common past rooted in history and a common desire to live together in the future are dependent variables which are conducive to the creation of common identity."⁸

2. Origin of regionalism in India: Three Interpretations

The debate on the origin of regionalism in India is an interesting one. Theoretically speaking, this inquiry is carried out in three different undertones by three different streams of thoughts. The first group argues that the origin of regionalism is a colonial or a British legacy.⁹ This group holds that it is the colonial rule in India that decisively sowed the seeds of regionalism. The British in following their colonial interests did not pay any heed to the needs of different areas. Their policies and programs were such that they eventually resulted into some areas developing more than the rest. This developmental heterogeneity was further helped by their strategy to divide the people on the basis of religion. This school of thought, nationalist in its underpinnings, can be termed as externalist as it looks for the external agent being the chief cause for the origin of regionalism in India.

On the other hand, the second school of thought extends that the origin of regionalism in the country is chiefly due to the specificities of Indian society. In other

⁶ Aijaz Ashraf Wani, "Ethnic identities and the dynamics of regional and sub-regional assertions in Jammu and Kashmir." *Asian Ethnicity* 14, no. 3 (2013): 309-341.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ M. P. Dube, "Regionalism in India: Some Critical Observations with Special Reference Uttarakhand Movement." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 56, no. 1/4 (1995): 85-97.

⁹ Manas Chakrabarty, Ajoy Kr. Datta, and Jaydip Roy. "Regionalism: A Colonial Legacy of the British." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 70, no. 3 (2009): 693-704.

words, the diversity of Indian society, the sub-continental size of the country and the economic imbalance caused by flawed policies of the government in the country post-independence are the factors which combine to produce the final product of regionalism. This school of thought can be called the internalist as it focuses on the internal features of Indian society and politics for explaining the origin of regionalism.

The third school of thought is a sort of meeting-point between the two foregoing schools and offers a moderate picture of the causes of the origin of regionalism. It holds that both the colonialism and the specificities of Indian society and politics have led to the origin of regionalism. This line of argument is used by majority of the scholars working on the theme. This school of thought is more dependable as it presents a balanced picture of the origin of the regionalism. We can call it the eclectic school of thought on the origin of regionalism.

3. An overview-sketch of regionalism in independent India

Immediately after independence, different kinds of views were expressed regarding the nature and future of India's existence. There were two prominent school of thoughts in terms of their take on India's future. These two points of views, as we will see, were literally opposed to each other.

The first view emphasized the high probability of India's disintegration at any moment. This point of view can be termed what Ram Chandra Guha calls the 'Strachian view'.¹⁰ The Strachian view can be better studied under two heads. The pre-statehood and the post-statehood Strachian view. The pre-statehood Strachian view was supported by a vast number of people. Majority of pre-statehood Strachians were British. They included Sir John Strachey(1803-1907 A.D.) who was a British Civil Servant in colonial India,

¹⁰ Sir John Strachey was a British civil servant in India who worked on various posts between 1842-80. His lectures on India were compiled in a book under the title of "India". As Ram Chandra Guha holds in the prologue of his widely acclaimed work "*India after Gandhi*", for Strachey, "the differences between the countries of Europe were much smaller than those between the 'countries' of India". Ram Chandra Guha, *India after Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*. London: Macmillan, 2007.

Rudyard Kipling(1865-1936) and Sir Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill(1874-1965 A.D), who served two terms as British Prime Minister from 1940-45 and from 1951-55. The pre-statehood Strachian were staunch supporters of British Raj in India and earnestly abide by the theory of ‘The White Man’s Burden’. They held that “India’ was merely a label of convenience, “a name which we give to a great region including a multitude of different countries”. For them giving India self-rule was tantamount to letting the people of the country slip to the past -- the past which was characterised by inhumane social evils, no sense of political order and pathetic economic conditions. They believed that the people of the land were politically infant and hence were not fit for self-rule.

The post-statehood Strachians were also considerable in number. The climax of this point of view was reached in 1960 with the publishing of Selig S. Harrison’s seminal work *India: The most Dangerous Decades*. Reduced to its essentials, this point of view held that given the regional and sub-national tendencies of Indian state, Indian state will most likely break away in the coming decades. It held that Jawaharlal Nehru’s imminent exit from the stage of Indian Politics would meant the disappearing of the force which kept the centrifugal forces of India under check. This stand strongly anticipated the balkanization of India. But the prophecy of doomsayers turned out to be wrong and India’s existence as a compact unit continues.

There was a qualitative difference between the post-statehood Strachians and the pre-statehood Strachians. Whereas the former held that India was not at all eligible for being termed a compact country the latter opined that the continuity of the existence of Indian state was but almost impossible. Basically, both the views concentrated on the centrifugal features of Indian state. For them, the centrifugal component of Indian state was strong and was characterized by large number of regions defined on the basis of language, religion, race, geography and so forth.

The second view, on the other hand, was optimistic about the future of India. This view held that India’s diversity was though a challenge but it was surmountable. The aphorism of unity in diversity was widely used and circulated by this group. They dubbed the fears of the first group as indicative of lack of knowledge about the uniqueness and potential of the East. One can term this school as the optimists and the first view as

doomsayers as the former was sanguine about the future of India and the latter predicted the arrival of doom for India.

Notwithstanding the skepticism, as the history witnessed, multiple regional and centrifugal tendencies did emerge, but were adjusted in a way so as to be complementary to the existence of Indian state instead of being its nemesis. This process of recognition of regions and regionalism within Indian state took place in various stages. The overarching criterion of recognition of regions and sub-regions kept altering with the passage of time. We take up the discussion of this process and some of its nuances in the forecoming pages.

4. Post-independence re-adjustment of boundaries of the units of Indian Union

After India became independent from British rule, the constituent units of Indian state were classified into four categories. Former British Indian states were kept under Part A category. This subgroup of states had nine states.¹¹ The former Princely States were kept in Part B category. This sub-group of states also contained nine states.¹² Ten former princely states and Chief Commissioner Provinces were included in the Part C category.¹³ Part D category had only one state of Andaman and Nicobar Island. The boundaries of these states were inherited from the British Raj. Hence, the boundaries were randomly drawn so as to suit the political, economic and military interests of the colonizers. It was therefore felt that the reorganization of the states needs to be executed sooner rather than later. But the principle that should rule the reorganization of the states was not arrived at.

The most vociferous proposal stood for the linguistic reorganization of the states. In fact, the members of the Indian National Congress (INC) had agreed on the

¹¹ Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Madhya Pradesh (formerly Central Provinces and Berar), Madras, Orissa, Punjab (formerly East Punjab), Uttar Pradesh (formerly the United Provinces), and West Bengal.

¹² Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Bharat, Mysore, Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU), Rajasthan, Saurashtra, and Travancore-Cochin.

¹³ Ajmer, Bhopal, Bilaspur, Coorg, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Kutch, Manipur, Tripura, and Vindhya Pradesh.

reorganization of the Indian states on the basis of language in 1920 and also constituted the Indian National Congress Provincial Committees on the same lines. This stance of the party was reiterated several times including in the election manifesto of 1945-46. But with the partition of the country on religious identity, the Congress re-adjusted its stance on the question. It now looked the proposals of linguistic reorganization with immense apprehensions. It feared that the country might get further divided if the language identity is taken as a method of reorganization. Therefore, Dr. Rajendra Prasad appointed The Linguistic Provinces Commission on 17 June, 1948 to examine the desirability and efficiency of linguistic reorganization. The commission was popularly known by the name of Dhar commission. The commission comprised of three members. SK Dhar was the chairperson and JN Lal and Panna Lal were two other members. The Commission submitted its report on 10 December, 1948. It held that the “ formation of provinces on exclusively or mainly linguistic considerations is not in the larger interest of the Indian nation”.¹⁴ It recommended the reorganization of the states on the basis of geographical contiguity, financial self-sufficiency and ease of administration.

The Congress at its Jaipur session appointed JVP Committee to study the recommendations of the commission. Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabh Bhai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya were the three members of this Committee. The committee submitted its report in April, 1949. It disagreed with the idea of reorganization of the states on the basis of language. But the Committee also quoted that "if public sentiment is insistent and overwhelming, we as democrats, have to submit to it subject to certain limitations in regard to the good of India as a whole".¹⁵ It also maintained that a case can be made for Andhra Pradesh's Telugu-speaking people. This was a strong enough endorsement to encourage the demand for a Telugu-speaking state of Andhra Pradesh.

By the 1952, the demand for the Telugu speaking Andhra Pradesh became extremely tumultuous. The widespread movement for the demand reached its horizon with the death of Potti Sriramulu after 56-day hunger strike on December 15, 1952. He was a Gandhian and a former Congressman of standing. His demise precipitated strings

¹⁴ The report of the Dhar Commission-1948.

¹⁵ For many analyst, this particular clause was an indication that the Indian state could capitulate in favour of new states in future.

of violent protests across the state. Eventually, the resilient Congress party at the Centre yielded to the demand in 1953 and carved out the state of Andhra Pradesh for Telugu speaking people.

This creation was a true watershed in Indian politics. It served as an instance of inspiration for those parts of the country which also wanted their own areas to be declared as separate states. It opened a sort of Pandora box of demands for statehood. It blew life in the dormant statehood aspiration of various regions of the country.

Under constant pressure from almost all corners, Nehru announced the formation of The State Reorganization Commission (SRC) in December, 1953. The SRC was a three member commission. It was chaired by Fazl Ali. Two other members of the body were K.M. Pannikar and Hari Nath Kunzru. It was mandated to look into the demand of creation of new states. It submitted its report in September, 1955. It recommended the abolition of fourfold classification of states into Part A, B, C and D as was originally enshrined in the constitution. It further recommended that the country should be divided into 16 states and 3 Union Territories(UTs).

Not all, but most of the recommendations of the commission were accepted by the government. On the line of its recommendations The State Reorganization Act, 1956, was passed in the parliament. The act provided for the creation of 14 states and 5 UTs.¹⁶ Thus, regional aspirations of many communities were quenched by the way of granting full-fledged statehood.¹⁷

But, contrary to what was intended, this large scale reorganization of the states did not result into the eradication of all demands for statehood. The permutation and alteration in the boundaries of the units of Indian Union became a constant thing and continues to be so even after almost seven decades of its independent existence. This has been so for a couple of reasons. First, there were some territories which were added to

¹⁶ The 7th Constitutional Amendment Act was passed to give effect to the changes.

¹⁷ The 14 full-fledged states of Indian Union then were Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Bombay State, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Madras State, Mysore State, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Indian Union post-State Reorganization Commission of 1956, and these territories needed and were given separate administrative status. Second, many communities aggressively demanded their own separate states within Indian Union and some of them were given the same. A general chronological survey of the same process is discussed next.

The French government passed Chandernagore, Mahe, Yanam and Karaikal to India in May, 1956. Puducherry was given the status of a Union Territory. Goa was liberated from Portuguese in 1961. The state of Bombay was bifurcated in 1960 to create the state of Gujarat. The Shah Commission was constituted to look into the demand of a separate *Suba*(state) by the Sikh people. The composite Punjab was thus reorganized in 1966. The state of Haryana was thus created. The hilly areas of the composite state of Punjab were attached with Himachal Pradesh, which was then a Union Territory. Chandigarh was made the joint capital of Haryana and Punjab.

In the North-East India, Nagaland was carved out of Assam in 1963 and Meghalaya in 1966. In 1971, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura also got full-fledged statehood. The same status was given to Sikkim in 1975. Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh in February 1987 and Goa in May, 1987 were given the status of full-fledged states. In 2,000, three new states were formed-Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand. The long-fought demand for a separate state of Telangana was met in the year 2014 when it was carved out of Andhra Pradesh.

Still there are demands going on across the country for new states-Gorkhaland, Bodoland, etc. Commenting on the basis of the past attitude of Indian state, It is highly likely that more states within Indian Union might emerge in future.

5. Conceptualizing the typography of Regionalism in India

Understanding regionalism in India necessitates a crucial realization that regionalism has been a phenomenon with diverse textures. Putting it in other words, the cases of regionalism in India have not been homogeneous. Sources of this heterogeneity

are numerous. For example, the various expressions of regionalism have been different in terms of their sources of origin, the nature of their demands and the points of their manifestations. It means that different types of regionalism have existed and still exist in India.

We can evolve couple of typographies to illustrate the said variation. The typography evolved in the following lines is designed on the basis of demands put forward by different regions. In other words, this is demand based typography of regionalism.

5.1 Type-One: Demand for separate states

As is manifested from the heading above, this type of expressions of regionalism demand separate state formation. This was one of the earliest type of regionalism in Independent India. In addition to this, it has also been one of the most prevalent kinds of regionalism. It is useful to point out that the basis for the demand for the separate states have also been multiple. Some demands of this kind were driven by linguistic identity(Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, etc.) and others have been for providing a more concrete shape to the uniqueness of the culture of an area(Gorkhaland). Demands for a separate state have also sometimes been fueled by the argument of underdevelopment. The argument holds that the area has been left behind in the race of development in comparison to some other area of the state and hence should be provided with a separate state identity so as to rapidly carry out the project of development(Take Telangana for the purpose of an instance). We have also seen the instances where geographical features of a particular area has led that area into demanding for a separate state(Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh). Thus, language, underdevelopment, cultural uniqueness and outstanding geographical features are some of the factors which often become basis for the demands of separate statehood. It would be beyond reality to assume that these factors operate in isolation from each other. That is not the case. In fact, we often find them intermingling with each other so as to buttress the demands for

separate state. Moreover, all the demands for separate state would be supported by the thesis of ‘administrative efficiency’.¹⁸

5.2 Type-Two: Demand for greater autonomy from the Centre

This simply means that the already existing state is demanding for more autonomy. This translates into demands for more powers for the states. We can visualize this type into two sub-types. First where an individual state demands for more autonomy and does not generally look to advocate the same argument for other states. This can be called a vertical demand for state autonomy. We can take Jammu and Kashmir for this sub-type which usually demands more autonomy for itself without any reference to extending the same to other units of the Indian Union. The 2nd sub-type concerns the situation where states collectively rally for more autonomy to all the units of Indian Union. We can term this sub-type as a horizontal demand for state autonomy. This has been done on various occasions. We can quote the Raj Mannar Committee, Anandpur Sahib Declaration, West Bengal Memorandum and Sarkaria Commission, etc. as examples of such efforts.

5.3 Type-Three: Autonomy within a state

In this type, one or more than one area of a state demands for more autonomy within the administrative boundaries of an already existing state. It translates into demands for more shares in the resources of a state. It is often propelled by the development lag caused to that particular region. In other words, this is generally caused by economic reasons. Working of other causes in this type of regionalism depends on the particulars of the regions. This type of regionalism is often called sub-regionalism. Examples of this type are demands of the Lower Himachal, demands of the Vidarbha etc.

6. Some recent trends in regionalism in India

¹⁸ It means that all demands for separate statehood usually claim that the administrative quality will be enhanced if the area is given the full-fledged statehood.

We can note two major recent trends in relation to the regionalism in India. First, it is now viewed with less suspicion than it was used to be viewed in the last century by the Indian state. Now the emphasis is to harness the potential of regionalism for national development. Second, the category of sub-regionalism has also come up to take some of the space previously occupied by regionalism.

The shift in the attitude of the Indian state towards regionalism can be attributed to a couple of reasons. First, it can be seen as one of the many results of the coalition politics at the centre wherein the regional parties-which are one of the most robust carriers of regionalism- get a considerable say in the Union government. With the increased participation of regional parties in the national politics, two things happen together- the regional parties' regional agenda gets diluted and the Union government also starts looking at the regionalism with less suspicion. Secondly, the liberalization of economy can also be seen as one of the reasons for this alteration in the attitude. Among other things, liberalization of economy implies that the top-bottom approach of economic planning gets diluted. Consequently, it means that the units of the Union gets increasingly more power in the economic sphere. That means that one of the most important reasons of regionalism, that is, the weak standing of units in economic spheres, gets eroded. Resultantly, we witness a less assertive regionalism.

We can also resort to the temporal distance from the partition for explaining this changed attitude. The argument can be put like this that because partition was the result of a sort of identity politics; therefore, the leaders immediately after independence were extremely skeptic of any phenomenon related with particularistic identity politics. As this experience of partition gets farther away in time; the structural suspicion engendered by it also gets diluted. To present the argument in other words, we can maintain that it was highly unlikely that the government at the centre could be friendly to regionalism immediately after partition. Probability of the friendly attitude of the Union government towards regionalism increases with the increasingly decreasing immediacy to the experience of partition. Thus, the temporal distance from the partition is positively related to the positive outlook towards the regionalism.

In addition to this, we have seen the recent emphasis of various Union governments on cooperative federalism.¹⁹ This in fact is a testimony to our claim that the attitude of the Union government towards the regions have altered.

In recent times, there has been a shift towards sub-regions from regions. This is best captured in the catch-phrase of regions-within-regions.²⁰ This in fact is an effort to study Indian politics with more sophistication. The current study also fits in this strand of studying Indian politics as it focuses on the regions within the region of Himachal Pradesh.

II

1. Studying sub-regionalism: the case of Himachal Pradesh

Taking Himachal Pradesh (HP) as a region of the Republic of India, we can talk of three broad economic-cum-social sub-regions which constitute this region. First sub-region is tribal-belt which is made up of the districts of Kinnaur, Lahaul-Spiti and some parts of Chamba. The 2nd one is the upper Himachal sub-region wherein lies the districts of Shimla, Kullu, Sirmaur and Solan. The third one contains districts of Kangra, Hamirpur, Una, Bilaspur and Mandi, Chamba save the tribal area. . The study shall invariably use the word region for these sub-regions.

¹⁹ Cooperative federalism is the principle which stresses the necessity of cooperation between the centre and the units and also among units. The Punchi Commission which was constituted in 2007 to look into the domain of Centre-States relation in India recommended Cooperative Federalism as a principle to be adopted by the Indian Union.

²⁰ This has become a popular phrase after the publishing of Ashutosh Kumar edited volume on State Politics. Ashutosh Kumar, "Introduction." In *Rethinking State Politics in India: Regions within Regions*, by Ashutosh Kumar, 1-30. New Delhi: Routledge, 2011.

The discussion on 'sub-regionalism' in the politics of the state invokes the latter two sub-regions. The tribal region due to extreme remote terrain and sparse population remains least influential in HP's politics in general.²¹

These two regions are represented by Shimla and Kangra. In popular parlance, these two regions are termed as old and new areas respectively. Claims and counterclaims-for resource distribution, political offices and representation, employment opportunities etc-are made on the lines of these two sub-regions. This sub-regional affiliation or identification has played substantial role in the politics of the state, and it has best manifested itself in the arena of electoral politics. In short, sub-regionalism is this identification of people with their respective sub-regions and simultaneously posing themselves in opposition to other sub-region.

These two regions, i.e., upper and lower Himachal or Shimla and Kangra region drew their peculiarities from topographic-features, colonial history, agro-ecology, economic relations, dialecto-linguistic, socio-culture webbing etc.

This factor has remained as a sort of constant in the politics of Himachal Pradesh. It was most visible in the decade of 1980 and after that it became less visible. Now it appears occasionally with lowered intensity, and that too during the times of state assembly elections.

2. Review of Literature

The scholarship on Himachal Pradesh directly and indirectly addresses the various aspects of the theme of sub-regionalism.

T. R. Sharma in his (1987 contribution²² observes that the merger of 1966 gave birth to many complex problems out of which the factor of region in the politics of HP

²¹ Ramesh Kumar Verma, *Regionalism and Sub-regionalism in State Politics: Social, Economic and Political Bases*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1994.

²² T. R. Sharma, "Observations on Himachal Politics." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (1987): 494-505.

was one. He talks about the difference in the economies of the old and new areas, the difference in the perceptions of the people of the both areas, the continuous disadvantageous state of the new area, generation and solidification of the feeling of discrimination in the people of the new area, only marginal ethnic differences between the both regions, larger land holdings in the old areas and the smaller land holdings in the new area, magnification of the regional factor by the leadership of the new area, recognition of the Congress with the horticulture zone and that of the BJP with the agriculture zone, present leadership trying to remove the feeling of upper and lower etc. He also mentions the sharpening of the sub-regional identity and expecting this polarization to be principal until the new areas complete the catch-up.

Ramesh Kumar Verma in his 1994²³ deals with this issue with unprecedented keenness. The author's contention is that the sub-regional identity in Himachal Pradesh is a perceived identity and it lacks an objective basis, i.e., the empirical evidences do not particularly indicate towards a real sub-regional-bias. Rather, it is an invented or manipulated feeling. This he backs up by closely comparing the two regions on the front of society, economy and politics. While concluding his enquiry, he states that though the phenomenon lacks any objective basis, but is a reality in the state and can any time take a monstrous shape.

Sharma again in 1999²⁴ talks of lower areas still nursing grievance for being neglected physiography being a factor in the electoral politics, people having prejudices against each other, feeling of 'relative deprivation' in the new areas, old and new divide being a considerable reality in the politics even after 30 years of the merger, strong performance of the BJP in the new areas in different elections in the state, the unleashing of single point strategy by the Congress in 1993 to extend its influence in the new areas and reaping intended dividends thereof and both parties increasingly improving their performance in the traditional strongholds of each other.

²³ Verma, *Regionalism and*, 1994.

²⁴ T. R. Sharma, "Local Configurations and National Parties in Himachal Pradesh." *Economic and Political Weekly* 34, no. 34/35 (1999): 2465-2471.

Up to now, scholars more or less agree about the hefty weight of the sub-regional factor in the politics of the state, but here after, scholars increasingly realize that the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh politics as a factor is weakening.

Chauhan and Ghosh in 2004,²⁵ and in 2009²⁶ also comment on the sub-regional aspect in the state. They talk about BJP failing in new areas. They observe that the 'matured electorate' of HP seems to be no longer interested in the emotionally driven factor of sub-regionalism. They went even deeper to state that the regions within the state are likely to continue losing the political weightage.

Kumar and Chauhan²⁷ also make it clear that now sub-regions no longer by default imply strength or weakness of either of the two political parties. Then, Bhardwaj²⁸ talks about regional divide being conspicuously absent in the assembly elections of 2007.

3. Research gap

This broad overview of what the literature says about the problematic of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh makes it clear that with the turn of the 21st century the sub-regionalism has lost the glue and influence in the politics of HP which it did enjoy earlier. This is recognized in most of the work done on Himachal in the last fifteen years or so. But, there is an interesting and important question related with this phenomenon that this literature is silent about i.e., the literature does not address the question as to what is/are the reason(s) for this slackening of the influence of sub-regionalism in the politics of the state, Why the sub-regionalism has watered down. In short, what has led to the weakening of the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh?

²⁵ Ramesh K. Chauhan and S. N. Ghosh. "Bipolar Contest." *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, no. 51 (2004): 5504-5507.

²⁶ Ramesh K Chauhan, and S. N. Ghosh. "Himachal Pradesh Elections 2007: A Post-Poll Analysis." *Economic and Political Weekly* 44, no. 6 (2009): 46-47.

²⁷ Sanjay Kumar, and Ramesh K. Chauhan. "Elections 2003: Understanding Complex Choices." *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 28 (2003): 2927-2932.

²⁸ Prem R. Bhardwaj, "Himachal Pradesh Elections: An Analysis." *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 2 (2008): 13-16.

4. Significance of the Study

The study employs the sub-region-sub-regionalism analytic for its better part which has not been as well explored as the analytic of region-regionalism. This venture is in sync with the recent necessity and usefulness felt by the Indian Political Scientists to reorient their focus towards what is called 'regions within regions'. It is crucial to understand the Indian Politics from this direction as it certainly helps to understand some hitherto not-understood or misunderstood phenomena. It is also useful in the sense that it would help to understand the nuances of identity sedimentation and intensification, and dilution and softening, in terms of sub-regional identities. This work shall help us to understand how the change in the political environment, in the nature of the state, and how the specificities of an area determine the trajectory of the phenomenon of sub-regionalism. It would depart from the widely accepted understanding which says that sub-regional economic imbalances and identity assertion have been blanketly increased from and after the decade of 1980. It would help us to add a contextual clause to this understanding.

5. Limitations of the study

The first limitation of using the sub-regional analytic tool for studying the politics of Himachal Pradesh is that the sub-regions in state are not sharply demarcated in terms of their nature. That is to say, the categories of old and new Himachal Pradesh are confused with the category of upper and lower Himachal and the sub-regions are multi-layered in their nature, i.e. socio-cultural, economic, geographic. It makes the analysis somewhat challenging. In addition to this, the neglected position of the tribal belt in the sub-regional politics in the state might not allow the researcher to present a holistic picture of the politics of the state. Furthermore, the lack of research on the theme makes the venture ridden with more limitations.

6. Research Questions

These are some of the questions which this research seeks to answer

- What is the explanation for the weakening of sub-regionalism in HP when regionalism-sub-regionalism has generally intensified across the country?
- What have been the changes in the texture of sub-regionalism in HP since 1966?
- How has this phenomenon impacted the trajectory of the policy-framing of the state?
- Do the structural specifications of the sub-regionalism in HP have caused its weakening?

7. Subject matter of chapters

The 2nd chapter of the study unfolds in two sections. First section introduces the general aspects of society, economy and politics of Himachal Pradesh. It also presents the administrative history of the state wherein various stages in its formation and the situations preceding it are discussed. Before moving to the second section, some most important features of the state politics are discussed. The second section of the chapter introduces the ‘sub-regional aspect’ of the politics in the state. The sub-regional mapping of the state is presented. Brief introduction of the various sub-regions is laid down. The section signs out by discussing the similarities and dissimilarities between the sub-regions.

The next chapter discusses the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh from various directions. Manifestations and causes of sub-regionalism are dealt in this order. We , then, discuss the various stages of sub-regionalism in the state. The discussion on the nature and the uniqueness of the sub-regionalism in the Pradesh closes the chapter. The fourth chapter takes up the fundamental question related with the *Himachali* sub-regionalism. It analyzes the factors responsible for the weakening of sub-regionalism in recent time in Himachal Pradesh. This is accomplished under six parts relating to political, economics, social, state response, structural specificities and miscellaneous. The last chapter summarizes the study and sets forth some concluding remarks.

Chapter: 2

Himachal Pradesh: An Insight into the History, Society, Economy and Politics

Abstract

The chapter is organized under three broad parts. The first part begins with an outline of the geography and physiography of the state. It is followed by a discussion of the history of the state before independence under two heads-pre-colonial and colonial history. An account of the post-independence history of the state is provided in the form of its administrative evolution from a Chief Commissioner Province to a full-fledged state of Indian Union. The second part brings out the main features of the politics of Himachal Pradesh. An established two-party system and absence of any strong state party; political stability; unique role of caste in politics underlined by the political competition between Rajputs and Brahmins and negligible presence of Dalit politics; underrepresentation of women in political echelon in spite of the developed status of the state; role of lobbies in the decision making; and the sub-regional angle in the politics of the state are discussed. The third part focuses on the sub-regionalism in the state and begins with introducing the sub-regions of Himachal Pradesh. An outline of the three sub-regions along with their role in the sub-regional politics is discussed. The sub-regions that directly figure in the sub-regionalism-lower and upper Himachal-are discussed in detail. The similarities and dissimilarities between these two sub-regions are laid down after a discussion on the meaning of sub-regionalism in the state.

Introduction

The principal objective of this chapter is to present an introductory picture of the society, economy and politics of the state of Himachal Pradesh along with highlighting its geographical and topographical features. Various phases in the administrative development of the state—from a chief commissioner province to a full-fledged state of Indian Union—are introduced. A broad discussion of the state politics is undertaken before moving on to the sub-regional aspect of the state politics in some detail.

I

1. Himachal Pradesh: Geographical and Physiographical Outline

The state of Himachal Pradesh, which is mainly known to the people of India and abroad as a picturesque landscape in India, is a part of the Western Himalayas. It is located in the North-West part of India.¹ It shares its borders with four states of Indian Union, i.e., Jammu Kashmir in the North, Punjab in the West and south-West, Haryana in the South and Uttarakhand in the South-East. The state also shares international border with the Chinese territory of Tibet.² It has an area of 55,673 square kilometers.³ This is 1.69% of the area of India. Area wise, it is the 18th largest state among all Indian states and is larger than the neighboring states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttarakhand.⁴

The state is drained by five major rivers i.e., Sutlej, Ravi, Chenab, Beas and Yamuna. These are perennial rivers in the sense of water flow. As far as the length of these rivers in the state is concerned, Sutlej is the longest and Yamuna is the smallest.

¹ Shimla is its summer capital and Dharamshala has been recently made the winter capital.

² Out of the 3488 km border that India shares with China, 200 km is in Himachal Pradesh. Quoted from the “MANAGEMENT OF INDO-CHINA BORDER” report of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Taken from https://mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/INDO%20CHINA_05052017.pdf

³ <http://himachal.nic.in/en-IN/at-a-glance.html>

⁴ The area of Uttarakhand, Haryana and Punjab is 53,483 square km, 44,212 square km and 50,362 square km respectively.

Chandrabhaga or Chenab holds the largest volume of water among these rivers.⁵ These rivers have a significant place in the life of the people of the state. These rivers not only hold a central place in the religious and spiritual sphere of life of the people but also in the spheres of economy, culture, administration and politics.

Not surprisingly but interestingly, most of the *non-Himachali* outsiders visualize the state as a purely hilly state. Though the perception holds sufficient truth, it falls short of the exactness. This perception ignores the heterogeneity of the geographical and topographical landscape of the state. The state is, to put in other words, a geographically diverse entity. This becomes unquestionable as one notices that its altitude ranges from about 450 meters to about 65,00 meters. Topographically, its texture is mountainous and semi-mountainous. It also has some plain areas. In fact, some of its plain-belts are comparable with the fertile plains of Haryana and Punjab. As a thumb rule, the degree of mountainaenity increases as one goes from the Northern part to the Southern part of the state. However, it should be noted that this rule cannot be stretched too far as one is bound to found exceptions to it. Districts and areas contiguous with the states of Haryana and Punjab generally have the semi-mountainous texture. In the nomenclature of geography this is called the Shivalik range. Districts of Una, Kangrah, Hamirpur and some parts of Sirmaur and Chamba fall under this range. The texture of the state becomes increasingly rugged and mountainous as one heads towards the areas falling under the Mid and Interior Himalayas. In short, the geography of the state is mountainous and semi-mountainous. The mountainous and semi-mountainous regions are referred to as the upper and the lower area respectively. This geographical diversity of the state translates into difference on the level of temperature, rainfall and weather. The importance of understanding this specification of the state is necessary as it exercises immense leverage on the society, politics and the economy of the state.

2. Himachal Pradesh: An Outline of the History of the Pre-Colonial period

⁵ Quoted from the report “Directory of Water Resources in Himachal Pradesh”, State Centre on Climate Change. Taken from www.hpccc.gov.in/documents/Water%20Sources%20in%20Himachal%20Pradesh.pdf

Strictly speaking, there was no Himachal Pradesh before the independence. Therefore,⁶ it may sound erroneous to talk of the history of pre-independence Himachal Pradesh. But, the expression-pre-colonial Himachal Pradesh- is here used to refer to the pre-independence history of those areas which in post-independence time came together to collectively constitute the state of Himachal Pradesh.

The earliest traces of human being in the Shivalik hills relate to around the end of the first glacial period.⁷The pre-Vedic inhabitants of the Shivalik hills were called *Dasas*.⁸ Though the *Aryans* eventually overpowered the indigenous people, but it was only after facing a valiant resistance from Sambhar and other *Dasa* chieftains. *Dasas* were fairly well organized. In addition to this, “Dasas had an immense wealth with them and they were well equipped for fighting”.⁹ Gradually the *Dasas* were integrated in the Aryan fold, thanks to the relentless efforts of the Vedic sage Vishvamitra. Sage Vashishta was though against this merging of non-Aryans in the *Aryan* society.¹⁰

Kinners also populated this land in ancient times, and they still do. However, they do not get any mention in the Rig Veda. Along with many other sources, Kalidasa's work *Kumarasambhava* refers to these people. They mainly inhabit the district of Kinnaur in modern day Himachal Pradesh. Then there were people called *Kiratas*. These people have a special mention in the different segments of Mahabharata.¹¹ *Nagas* (meaning the worshippers of serpents) also seem to have settled the land at one time. Another significant tribe of this land in ancient and later times was *Khasas*. It was relatively a

⁶ Himachal Pradesh is a post-colonial construction.

⁷ But archaeological evidences do not succeed in completely establishing and expounding this information. This view is also expressed in R. K. Kaushal, *Himachal Pradesh: A Survey of the History of the Land and Its People*. Bombay: Minerva Book Shop, 1965.

⁸ This is known from a Rig Vedic account where Vashishta and Vamdeva discuss the 40-years war which was fought between the Dasa king Shambar and Aryan king Devdasa. The war culminated in the eventual decisive victory of the Aryans.

⁹ Kaushal, *Himachal Pradesh*, 1965, 5.

¹⁰ Vishvamitra, according to the myths, was more liberal than Vashishta was.

¹¹ For example, Mahabharata tells that Bhima, Arjuna and Nakula faced them when they marched towards East, West and North respectively. Kaushal, *Himachal Pradesh*, 1965, 7.

stronger tribe, and it overwhelmed the *Kinners* and *Dasas*.“ Manu recognized *Khasas* as Kshatriyas.¹² *Yakshas* also lived in this land in ancient times.

In the age of Mahajanpadas this land came under the control of multiple Janpadas. The major Janpadas to establish their rule here were Trigarta, Kalakuta, Kulinderine, Kuluta, Audumbra and Yugandhara. The first Indian empire of the Indian history, i.e., the Maurya empire, established its rule over this land. The influence of the Buddhism in the hills was considerable in ancient times, especially in Kangrah. This is proved by archaeological and literary evidences.¹³

In the medieval period, Mahmood Ghaznavi invaded the Kangrah fort in AD 1099. After this attack, the same fort faced many aggressions during the life of the Delhi Sultanate. Mohammad Tughlaq attacked the fort in 1337. and the same was raided by Firoz Shah Tughlaq in 1363. Most of the Princely States of the hills were won over by Akbar via gentle behavior.¹⁴ The relations between the Mughal central power and the hills states remained largely cordial till Aurangzeb saddled on the seat of Badshahi. Some hill states like Chamba and Kangrah revolted against Mughals during his rule. With the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the Mughal hold over the hill states gradually faded away.

In this vacuum of an assertive overarching power, the Kangrah state progressed ahead of all other *Pahari* regional states. Sansar Chand was the greatest ruler of this principality. It was under his kingship that the Kangrah became a dominant force in the area. His aggressive and expansionary policies, however, contributed to the alienation of the other hilly states in relation to the state of Kangrah, and this alienation of Pahari kingdoms later contributed to the downfall of Kangra. In 1803-4, ruler of Bilaspur, after facing humiliation at the hands of Sansar Chand, invited Gorkhas to attack Kangra. The Gorkhas, a marshal community of Nepal, was then under the leadership of Amar Singh Thapa. They were then a formidable force and had conquered many parts of the land stretching from Nainital to Simla. Due to the assault unleashed by the Gorkhas, Sansar

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ Kaushal, *Himachal Pradesh*, 1965, 27.

¹⁴ Kaushal, *Himachal Pradesh*, 1965, 67.

Chand had to take shelter in the Kangra fort. After exhausting all his strength, Sansar Chand decided to request Ranjit Singh to help him fight the Gorkhas. In return, he promised Ranjit Singh of 66 villages and the Kangra fort. The collaborative effort of Ranjit Singh and Sansar Chand proved sufficient in defeating the Gorkhas.

It has to be remembered that in 1815, Nepal war was fought between the Nepalese on the one side and the British on the other side. And the British were assisted by most of the local chiefs. The British side emerged victorious and the Nepalese had to let go some portion of the hill states under their influence. It is from this time that Simla(now Shimla) came under the English.

The British and Sikhs fought with each other around the middle of the 19th century. Victory ended up on the side of the British in these battles. Consequently, the land in hill areas under the Sikh influence was also passed into the hands of British.

3. Himachal Pradesh- The Colonial History

Though the hill areas were not by any means anywhere close to the epicenter of colonial theatre in India, still, many significant events took place in these areas. Similar to what was the case with the entire India with respect to the revolt of 1857, the response and behavior of the hill states during the revolt of 1857 was also not uniform. That is to say, some states allied with the British and others chose to stay away from the British. For instance, whereas Raja Shamsher Singh of Bushahr sympathized with the sepoys, the Rana Krishan Singh of Arki and Raja Goverdhan Singh of Dhamsi actively supported the British in suppressing the revolt.

The British relations with the hill states were basically of two types. First, they incorporated some territories in the British India. Second, some of the hilly territories were allowed to govern themselves with autonomy as long as they did not infringe upon the British interests.

Major parts of the hilly states that were incorporated in the British India were part of the erstwhile Sikh state. Some territories obtained from the Gorkhas under the

provisions of the Anglo-Gorkha treaty of 1815¹⁵ were also incorporated. Rest of the states of the region were left at their own to sustain themselves.¹⁶

The British left India after partitioning it into two countries of India and Pakistan. Under the provisions of the Indian Independence Act, Indian Princely States were given the power to decide their destiny. They could either join India or Pakistan; or, they could decide to stay independent from the two countries and conduct their relations as they deemed suitable. The hill states of this region were divided into two conflicting wish of either joining India or maintaining their independent status. The desire to continue their unhindered independent status was fueled by a sense of uniqueness among the states coupled with rulers' will to protect their sovereignty. The push to join the Indian Union was provided by popular agitations led by the Praja Mandals.¹⁷ In addition to this, their weak economic and military structures, political pressure by the Government of India, etc., also served as contributing factors in this wish of convergence of the states with the Indian Union. The Shimla hill state rulers made a last and unsuccessful attempt to perpetuate the status quo in 1948. In early February, 1948, the rulers met at Solan under the Chairmanship of Raja Durga Singh of Solan (Bhagat) to draft a constitution to form a separate Union of States. But the attempt failed for want of popular support. Then, a conference of the rulers of the hill states was convened on second March, 1948. The Government of India here recommended that the hill states should be merged to form a unit within the Union of India. It was agreed to by the rulers. Thus, the sketch for the formation of the state of Himachal Pradesh was prepared. It came into being on fifteenth April, 1948 after merging about 30 princely hill states of the region.

4. Himachal Pradesh: Administrative History

¹⁵ This treaty was known by the name of Sugauli treaty.

¹⁶ The areas that were merged with Himachal Pradesh in 1966 were the areas that were under the direct control of the British whereas the areas that constituted the pre-1966 Himachal Pradesh were largely under the princely states.

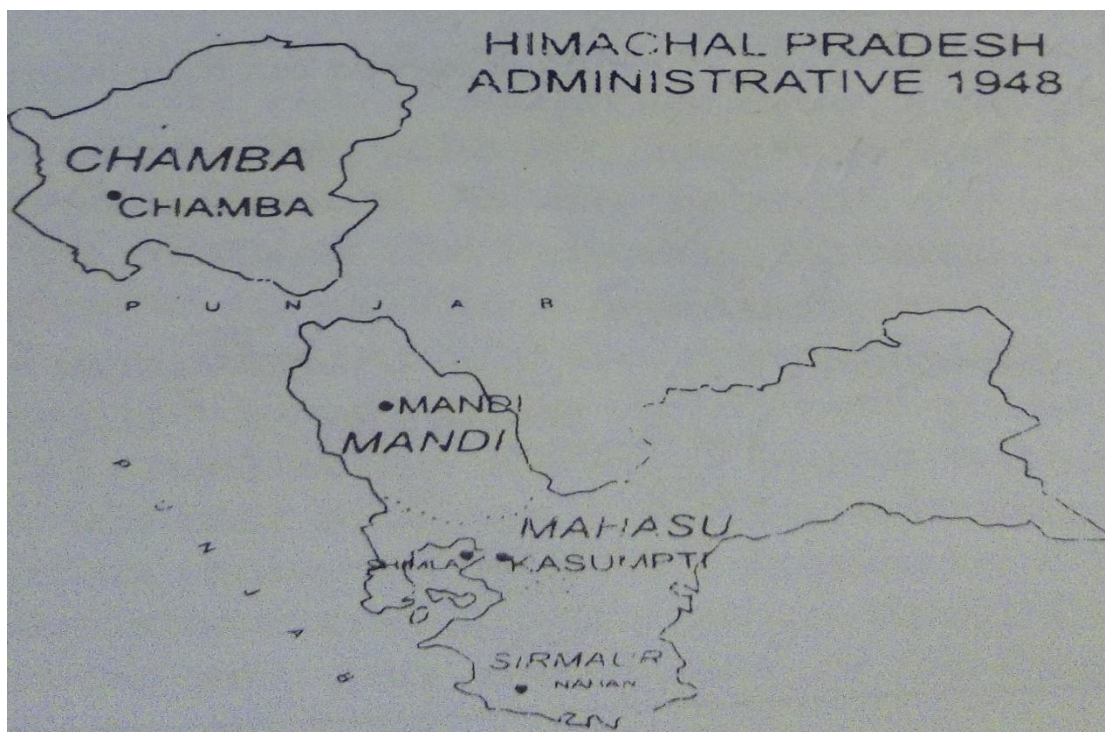
¹⁷ Prajamandals were the citizens' platforms in the princely states during the first half of the 20th century. Purpose of these platforms was to procure democratic rights for citizens from the rulers of princely states. The Praja Mandal movement was closely associated with the Congress.

The next few paragraphs will map the administrative history of Himachal Pradesh. This can be divided into three broad phases-1948-66, 1966-71 and after 1971.

The fact that the state of Himachal Pradesh has acquired its present shape and status after a long gestation period has already been expressed earlier. It had to pass through multiple stages before it could attain the complete statehood for itself. It first got its expression in the form of a Chief Commissioner Province, and then it was demoted to the status of a Union Territory(UT). It finally received the status of a full-fledged statehood in the year 1971. Meanwhile, it kept expanding its geographical contours as well. Thus, the administrative history of Himachal Pradesh here includes two processes- first the process of democratization of the system of government in the state, and second the process of geographical expansion of the state. This unfolding of Himachal Pradesh, so to speak, thus happened at two levels. It is dealt here not thematically but chronologically.

4.1 Himachal Pradesh in 1948

30 princely hill states were merged on 15 April, 1948 to create a new unit within the Indian Union which was named Himachal Pradesh. Out of these 30 princely hill states, 26 were Shimla Hill States and four were Punjab Hill States. Then this unit of Indian Union was conferred the status of a Chief Commissioner Province, administered by the Centre. N. C. Mehta was its first Chief Commissioner and Penderal Moon was appointed as his deputy. The major Princely States to be integrated were the states of Chamba, Mandi, Suket, Sirmaur and what used to be called the Shimla Hill States, minus Bilaspur and Nalagarh.



Source: Geography of Himachal Pradesh by Manoj Jreat

This was not a purely smooth achievement (the achievement of a democratic set up and accession to Indian Union) of Himachal Pradesh by any imagination. It was not smooth in the sense that the people of these hill states had to raise the banner of revolt against their rulers to win it. The movement was carried by the Prajamandals under the aegis of All India States People Conference.¹⁸

The wave of democratization in the hills did not run without opposition. It faced opposition from the collective-will of the hill rulers to continue their undemocratic monarchical rule. The princes joined hands to make a Union of the Hill States against this wave of popular demands of Accession to Indian Union and thus seeking to carry on the separate existence of the princely states. On the other side of the spectrum, faced with

¹⁸ For example, the merger movement was launched in almost all the states according to the decision taken at a meeting of the PrajaMandal on the 26th January, 1948 at Shimla. According to the schedule, Pt. Padam Dev led about 100 Satyagrahis to free the Suket people from the tyrannical rule of the chief on 16th February, 1948. Similar movements were carried in other princely states after this.

this joint-front of the Princely States, the popular leaders of the region asked for the guidance of the then State Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on the matter. He placed following options before them-

- a. To merge these Hill States with the Punjab.
- b. To merge some States with the Punjab and the others with the Uttar Pradesh.
- c. To have a Union of States like the one the Princes had set up at Solan.
- d. To be integrated into a Centrally Administered Province under a Chief Commissioner to start with, and then be given a legislature under a Lieutenant Governor and, finally, after the developing of their resources, to be made an autonomous State like any other state of Indian Union.

Though the leaders did not find any of the provided options equivalent to their expectations as they wished to win a complete statehood for the area, still, by virtue of their farsightedness, the leaders viewed the fourth option as the least dissatisfying and accepted it. The princes also gradually fell in line and signed the Instrument of Accession one after the other. Thus, the Government of India integrated these States into a centrally administered unit, that came to be known as Himachal Pradesh.¹⁹

At the time of its inception, the area of the state was 10,600 square miles and had a population of about 9,35,000 lakhs. It was arranged into four districts of Sirmaur, Chamba, Mandi and Mahasu.

This Centrally Administered Unit of Himachal Pradesh was thus a Chief Commissioner Province headed by a Chief Commissioner who was appointed by the central government. There was an Advisory Council to advise the Chief Commissioner. It consisted of nine members. Three members were from the royal families and the rest six were the representatives of the masses.

4.2 Himachal Pradesh as a Part 'C' state (1951-1956)

¹⁹ Vide para 116 of the White Paper on Indian States 1949.

The model of the centrally administered territory with a Chief Commissioner at the helm assisted by an Advisory Council attracted criticisms from many corners of the Indian society. It was not considered purely democratic. In addition to this, the system was also described as providing the Chief Commissioner a discretionary position in many subjects. With this background, the leadership of Himachal Pradesh led mainly by Dr. Y. S. Parmar and Pandit Padam Dev kept pointing towards the inadequacies of the advisory council in a democratic set-up.²⁰

Thus, the parliament passed an act to democratically upgrade the administration of centrally administered units in 1951. It was titled The Government of Part C states Act, 1951. The President signed it on 6.9.1951. Now the state of Himachal Pradesh became a Part 'C' state and had its democratically elected Legislature consisting of 36 members.

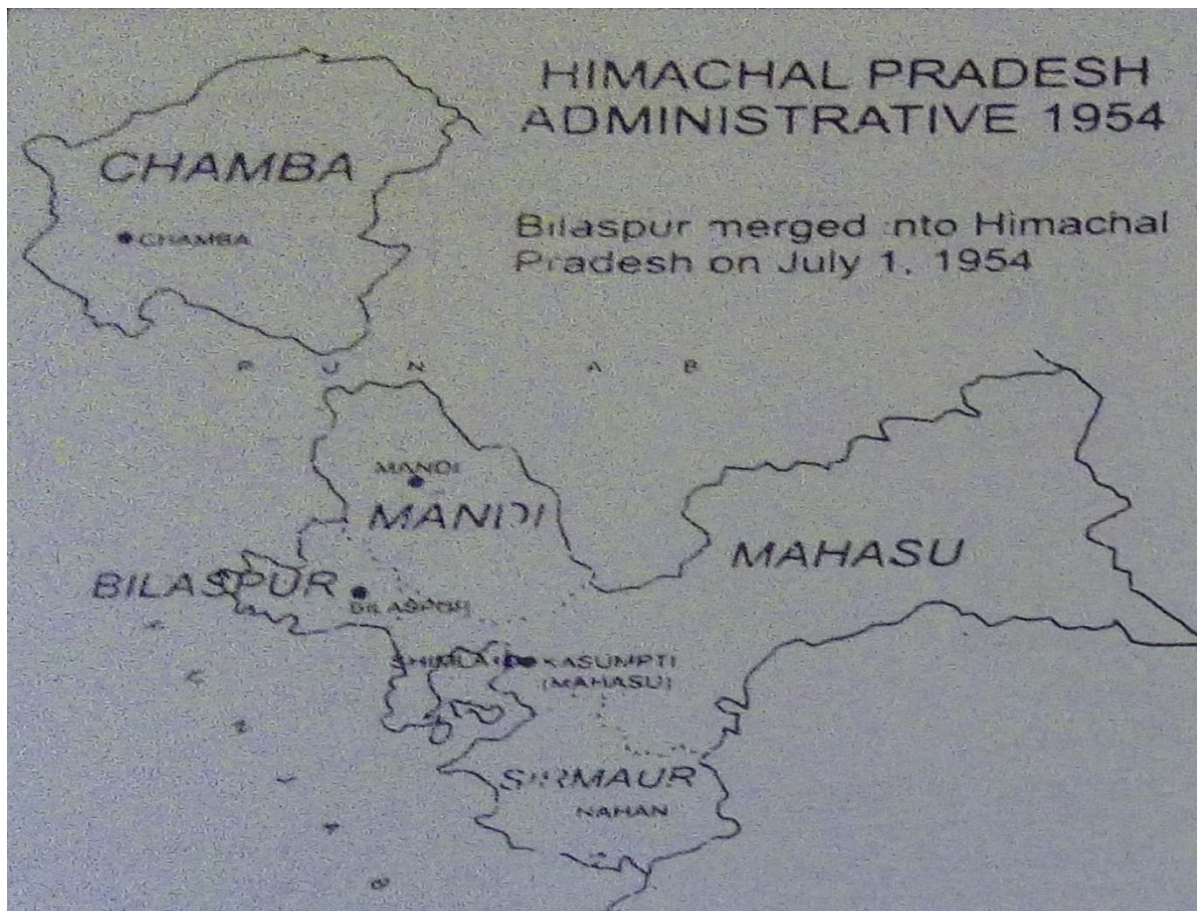
It was a significant milestone in the democratic journey of the state. Major General M. S. Himmat Singh sworn in as the Lieutenant Governor and Yashwant Singh Parmar became the first Chief Minister of the state. This democratic up gradation of Himachal Pradesh was though a welcome step, but it was not sufficient to please the people of the state. This system of government had multiple limitations in the sphere of finance, legislation and executive. And, its democratic nature was but limited. Hence, demands for further democratization continued.

4.3 Merger of the princely state of the Bilaspur in 1954

The Princely State of Bilaspur was not merged with Himachal Pradesh from outset in 1948. This was due to the strategic significance that the state of Bilaspur held for the Union Government. In the state, the Bakhra dam was under construction on the river Sutlej. This multipurpose project rendered thousands of people homeless and immersed a large portion of the state, including its capital, in the water. In other words, this project put enormous demands on the state machinery. Merging Bilaspur in Himachal Pradesh in 1948 itself would have meant leaving the new created state at its

²⁰ Yashwant Singh Parmar was the first Chief Minister of the state and Pt. Padam dev was the home minister.

own to tackle this momentous burden. Further, it was also administratively advisable to keep it unmerged with Himachal Pradesh. Keeping this in mind, the Union Government decided to make it a separate Chief Commissioner Province. In this manner the Centre could execute the planned actions swiftly. This merger, however, eventually took place in 1954. With this, Bilaspur became the fifth district of the state. It then had two tehsils- Bilaspur and Ghumarwin. As a result of this merger, the area of the state increased to 28,241 square km.



Source: Geography of Himachal Pradesh by Manoj Jreat

4.4 Himachal Pradesh as a Union Territory (1956-1971)

In 1953, a separate state was carved out for the Telugu speaking people. It was only after an intense and prolonged movement that this creation was realized. The creation of the separate state of Andhra Pradesh was the juncture in Indian politics after

which the demands for separate states started surfacing with unprecedented frequency in various parts of the country. The demands assumed such strength that the Union Government had to constitute a commission for considering the demands for the creation of new states within the Indian Union. This commission came to be known as the State Reorganization Commission (SRC). It was a three-member commission. Fazal Ali was its Chairperson and the other two members were K.M. Panikar and H.N. Kunzru.

In fact, this was not the first time that such a body was constituted by the Indian government. Earlier, Dhar Commission and the JVP (Jawahar Lal Nehru, Vallabhbai Patel and Pattabhi Sitaramayya) Committee also had the same terms of reference. These two bodies largely rejected the demands for the one language states.

The SRC conducted a comprehensive dialogue with the wide range of stakeholders in order to arrive at an optimum approach to deal the question of demands for separate states. The Commission also took up the Himachal question. The question in relation to the Himachal Pradesh was-

- a. Should Himachal Pradesh be allowed to continue the status quo wherein it is under the administration of Centre and also has a legislature?, or
- b. Should Himachal Pradesh be promoted to a full-fledged state of India as was the roadmap proposed by Sardar Vallabhbai Patel?, or
- c. Should it be demoted to the status of a Union Territory?, or
- d. Should it be merged with the state of Punjab?, or
- e. Should Himachal Pradesh be expanded by including the hilly areas of the state of Punjab?

The responses to these questions, as was expected, were not uniform. Many parties and bodies made their representations to the SRC. Out of many responses, there were two main responses in relation to the future of Himachal Pradesh that merit a special mention.

First response argued in favor of the democratic promotion of Himachal Pradesh to the status of a full-fledged state of the Indian Union. Its advocates included the Congress, Praja Socialist Party and Communists. The most vociferous advocate of the complete statehood was none other than the chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar.²¹ The arguments put forward in favor of complete statehood were-

- a. Himachal Pradesh would be able to realize its personality to the maximum extent only if it is provided a fully democratic system of government.
- b. The proposal of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to gradually qualify Himachal Pradesh as a complete state of the Indian Union also formed a basis for this demand.
- c. A unique social and cultural personality of the state was also put forward as a basis of full statehood.
- d. The unique geographical and economic conditions of the state were presented as a reason for giving it maximum autonomy so that the state could charter the most suitable path for itself.

The second line of argument was in favor of the merger of Himachal Pradesh with the state of Punjab. This group thus stood for the creation of Maha-Punjab. This demand was vehemently articulated by the Jan Sangh and the Aarya Samaj. It was maintained that-

- a. Since Himachal Pradesh is economically unviable, it should be merged with the state of Punjab.
- b. The merger of a predominantly Hindu state with the state of Punjab would help in counter-balancing the rising Sikh assertion in Punjab.

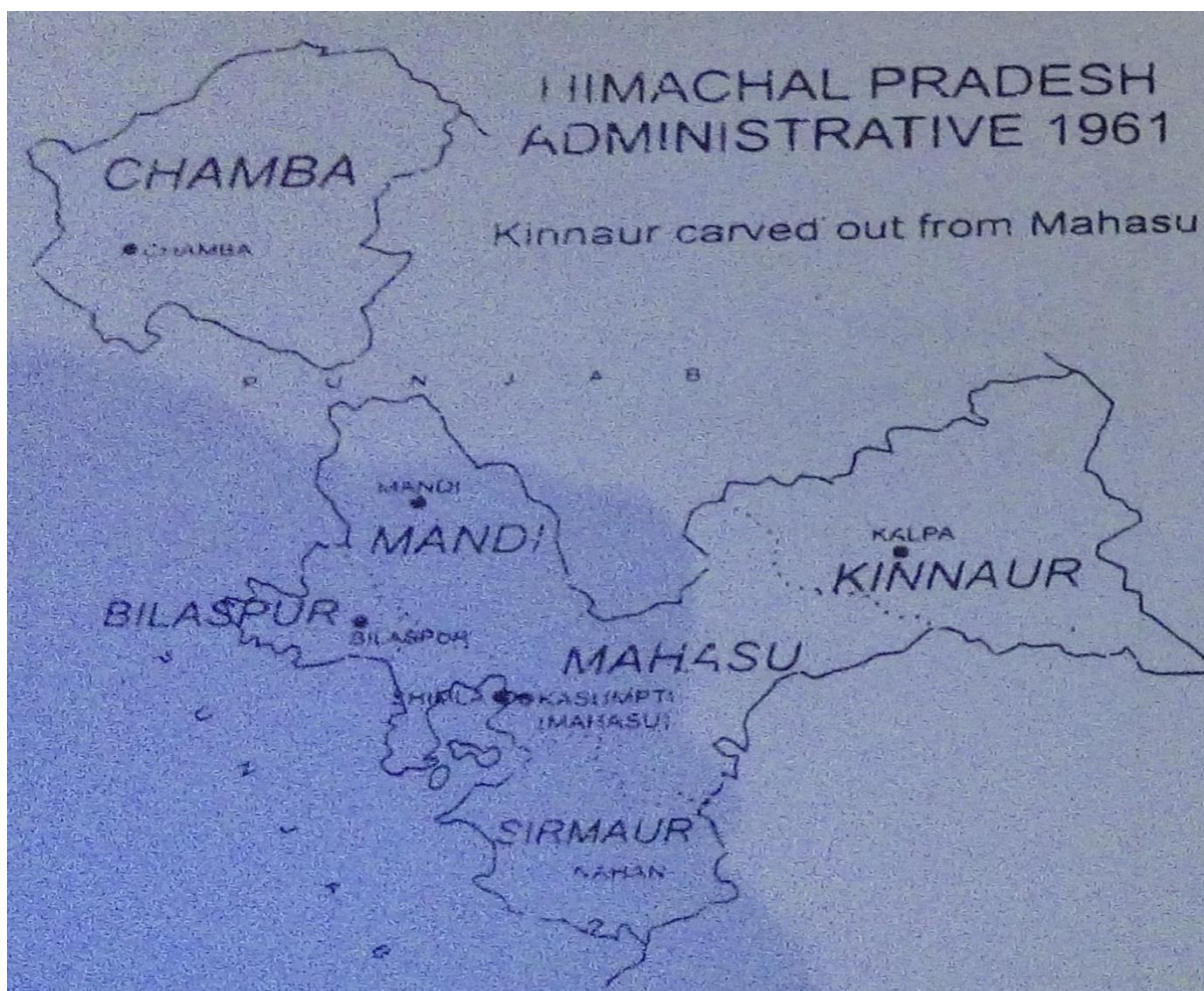
²¹ He brilliantly articulated the case for Himachal Pradesh in a book compiled with the title "Himachal Pradesh: Its Proper shape and Status" (1972).

The SRC seconded this line of thought and recommended for the merger of Himachal Pradesh with Punjab. The decision of the SRC was taken by majority but not by unanimity. H. N. Kunzru and K.N. Panikar stood for the merger but the Chairperson of the Commission Fazal Ali was in favor of the continued separate existence of Himachal Pradesh. He appended his famous dissent note at the end of the report of the Commission. He upheld that since Himachal Pradesh was altogether a different geographical, social, cultural and economic unit from Punjab, its merger would not be a beneficial step for the people of Himachal Pradesh. Furthermore, he maintained that the merger of Himachal Pradesh with Punjab might even infect the areas of Himachal Pradesh with the extremism and unrest that was rising in Punjab. Hence, it was not a wise move to merge Himachal Pradesh with Punjab.

Eventually the Union Government decided to continue the separate existence of Himachal Pradesh but made it a Union Territory in 1956 without a legislature. It was now administered by the centrally appointed Lt. Governor with a Territorial Council to assist him. It was seen as a political regression rather than a political progression by the state leadership in Himachal Pradesh. It was upheld that this move is a retrograde move as it deprived the people of the state from whatever little democratic setup they earlier enjoyed.

4.5 Creation of Kinnaur(1960)

On first May 1960, Kinnaur was created by joining the Chinni tehsil of Mahasu district with around 10 villages of Rampur tehsil of the same district. Thus, it became the sixth district of the state.



Source: Geography of Himachal Pradesh by Manoj Jreat

4.6 Government of Union Territories Act, 1963

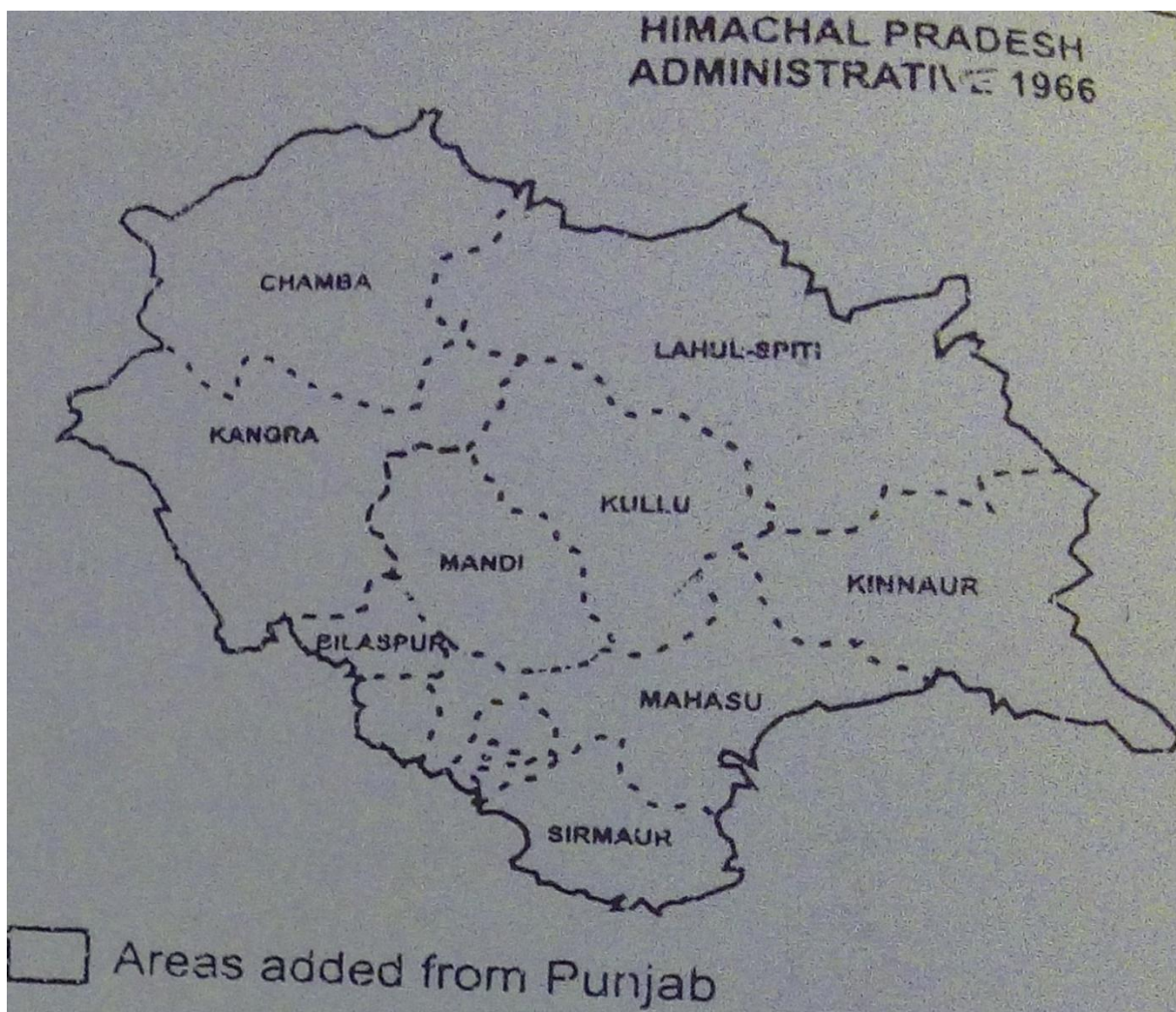
This act provided for Legislatures in some Union Territories including Himachal Pradesh. Thus, it reintroduced the Legislative Assembly in the state in place of the existing system of a Territorial Council.

4.7 Reorganization of Punjab and inclusion of new areas in Himachal Pradesh

In relation to the administrative evolution of Himachal Pradesh, the year of 1966 was a watershed.²² On 1st November, 1966, as a result of the linguistic reorganization of the composite state of Punjab, the hilly areas of Punjab were merged with Himachal

²² T. R. Sharma, "Observations on Himachal Politics." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (1987): 497.

Pradesh. Lahaul-Spiti, Kangrah, Kullu and Shimla were the areas to be merged with Himachal Pradesh. As a result of this merger, the population and area of the state almost doubled. By virtue of this merger an area of 27263 sq.km was added to the state that increased the total area of the state to 55,673 sq.km. Now, the state had ten districts, viz, Sirmaur, Mandi, Chamba, Mahasu, Bilaspur, Kinnaur, Kangrah, Kullu, Lahaul-Spiti and Shimla.



Source: Geography of Himachal Pradesh by Manoj Jreat

4.8 Himachal Pradesh as a full-fledged state of Indian Union, 1971

On 25th January, 1971, Himachal Pradesh was given the complete statehood and it became the 18th state of India. The declaration was made by the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi on the historic Ridge Maidan.



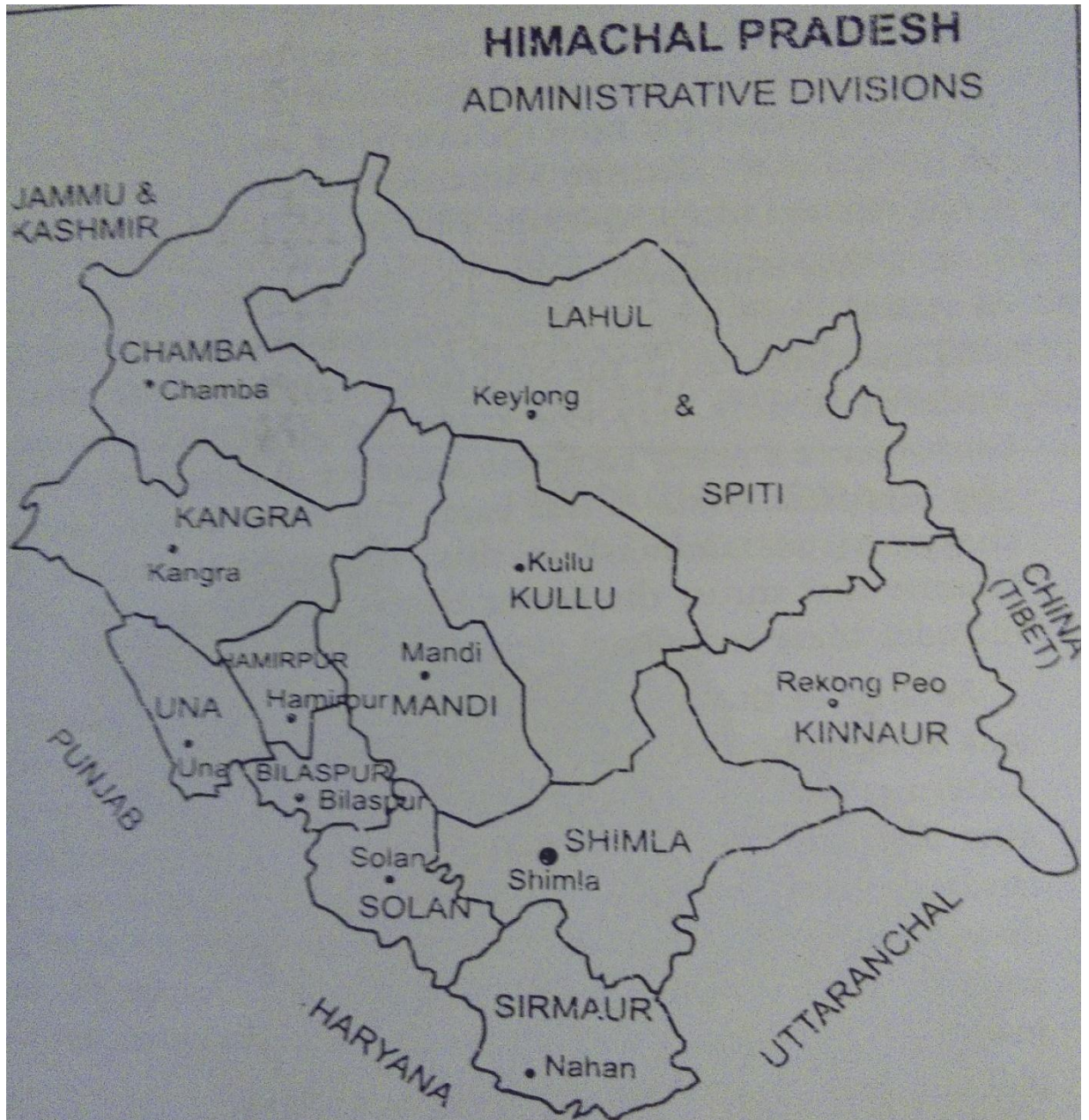
Source: Amar Ujala Photo Gallery (<https://www.amarujala.com/photo-gallery/shimla/indira-gandhi-announced-himachal-full-statehood-status-in-25-january-1971?pageId=7>)

The realization of the full-fledged statehood was a watershed in the history of the state. This was a successful end of the movement for statehood of this tiny constituent of Indian Union. This movement had some incredible features. First, it was a movement with absolute non-violence and zero-disruptive actions. Importance of this argument becomes clear when one juxtaposes it with the movements for statehood across the country that preceded it. For instance, the movements for the separate states of Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and others had an easily discernable pattern of violence and disruption. Second, this was not a mass movement in the proper sense of the term. That is to say, the level of participation by the masses was not as thick and intensive as was in the movements that are quoted above. On the other hand, it was a movement which was basically a top-down movement in the sense that the political leaders and bureaucrats participated in it at different capacities. It is not to suggest that the movement was completely devoid of the popular element. Rather, it is just to bring home the argument that it was relatively a more top-down movement than bottom-up. In fact, this second point can be a partial explanation for the first point. That is, because the participation of the general masses was not extreme, therefore, it was less pregnant with violent and disruptive tendencies. Third, the event was also unique in the sense that was a sort of a fait-accomplis. That is, giving the state of Himachal Pradesh a complete statehood was something that was a declared goal of the Indian Government. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's observation on this regard would substantiate our argument- "The ultimate object is to enable this area to attain the position of an autonomous province of India".²³

4.9 Administrative readjustments post-1971

On 29th of August, 1972, the latest reshuffle in the administrative outline of the state took place. A new district of Solan was created from the Mahasu district and Mahasu district was renamed as Shimla. Two new districts from district Kangra were carved out and named Hamirpur and Una. No further administrative reshuffle has since been done.

²³ Quoted by Yashwant Singh Parmar in the beginning of his Himachal Pradesh: Its proper Shape and Status.



Source: Geography of Himachal Pradesh by Manoj Jreat

Thus, now the state is organized into 12 districts, 3 divisions, 34 sub-tehsils and 51 sub-divisions. Besides this, it has four Lok Sabha Constituencies and three Rajya Sabha constituencies. In addition to this, there are twelve Zila Parishad, 78 Panchayat

Samitis and 3243 Gram Panchayats.²⁴ The number of blocks is 77 and tehsils are eight in number.

Other than this, The Himachal Pradesh High Court was also established in 1971.²⁵ The Himachal Pradesh public Service Commission (HPPSC) came into existence on 25th of April, 1971²⁶ and Himachal Pradesh Institute of Public Administration (HIPA) was inaugurated in 1974.²⁷ For conducting the subordinate service examination, a government body with the name of Himachal Pradesh Subordinate Service Selection Board (HPSSSB) was brought into being in 1998.

II

1. An Insight into the Politics of Himachal Pradesh

Studying the state politics in India requires a prior realization that the state politics is not only shaped by the conditions prevalent in a state but also by the factors that do not originate within the boundaries of a state. The sources of the politics of a state are thus multiple. The sources of politics here means the places, points, events, etc. which serve as the breeding ground for the origin of myriad elements that directly and indirectly become foder of politics. In other words, factors originating within the boundaries of a state are only one of the many aspects that project themselves on the state politics. Putting it differently, sources of the state politics are not completely confined within the boundaries of the concerned state. They (the sources of the state politics) also originate outside the boundaries of the concerned state.

²⁴ The number is extracted from the website of the Department of Panchayati Raj Institution, Govt. of HP. The website is <http://www.hppanchayat.nic.in/Department.html>.

²⁵ The date of foundation is retrieved from the website of the High Court itself, that is, <http://hphighcourt.nic.in/>

²⁶ <http://www.hppsc.hp.gov.in/hppsc/page/General.aspx>

²⁷ The date is taken from the website of the institute. That is, http://himachal.nic.in/index1.php?lang=1&dpt_id=15&level=0&linkid=2233&lid=916

The sources of the politics of a state are basically of two types. First those which originate within the boundaries of the concerned state and second those that originate outside the boundaries of the concerned state. The first kind of the sources can be called the territorial sources as they have their origin within the boundaries of the state. The second type of sources can be called extra-territorial as they have their place of origin outside the boundaries of the concerned state. The extra-territorial sources are of two types. First those that are of the national nature, i.e., eligible of qualifying as the factors in the national politics. The second are of the inter-state nature, that is, being less than the national issues but originating in some other state or states rather than in the state concerned.

The territorial and the extra-territorial factors work in tandem. The specific combination that their intermixture would produce varies from state to state. That is, some states would have relatively assertive territorial factors of the state politics than the other states and vice-versa. This variation in the intermixture of the territorial factors and extra-territorial factors of the politics of a state are the main cause behind the difference in the politics of the states in India. The factors making up the politics of Himachal Pradesh can be studied using this model.

As far as the territorial factors are concerned, one can always mention the omnipresent fodder of electoral politics like corruption, mis-governance, fragile financial health of the state etc. Focusing towards some specific characteristics of the politics of this tiny state, one can talk of the dominance of two-party system, constituted by two national parties, i.e., the Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP) and the Congress.²⁸ It is one of the few states of Indian Union, if not the only one, to have established a matured two-party system. A significant feature of this two-party system is the rotation of the ruling party in almost every State Legislative Assembly election. In other words, the anti-incumbency is a dominant phenomenon of the electoral politics of the state. The assertion is

²⁸ Ramesh K Chauhan, and S. N. Ghosh. "Himachal Pradesh Elections 2007: A Post-Poll Analysis." *Economic and Political Weekly* 44, no. 6 (2009): 46-47, and Prem R. Bhardwaj, "Himachal Pradesh Elections: An Analysis." *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 2 (2008): 13-16.

substantiated by the following table that presents the picture of elections results from the legislative elections of 1985.

Sr. No.	Year of Election	Party making govt.	Runner up Party
1	1985	INC	BJP
2	1990	BJP	INC
3	1993	INC	BJP
4	1998	BJP	INC
5	2003	INC	BJP
6	2007	BJP	INC
7	2012	INC	BJP
8	2017	BJP	INC

Note: 1. INC stands for the Indian National Congress and the BJP for the Bharatiya Janata Party.

2. The 1993 elections were conducted prematurely as the assembly elected in 1990 was dissolved.

Source: The Election Commission of India.

Another significant feature flows from the first feature. That is to say, the formidable standing of two national parties in the state also means that the state parties and the regional parties do not hold any control in the electoral politics in this state. It has to be mentioned here that though some state parties and regional parties have showed signs of success in the state but they could not sustain the momentum, and their influence, however feeble it was, withered away with the passage of time. Some of the state political parties that followed this pattern were Him Loktantrik Morcha (HLM), Himachal Lokhit Party (HLP), Himachal Swabhimani Party (HSP) and Loktantrik Morcha Himachal Pradesh (LM). As far as the regional political parties are concerned, they have also showed the same trajectory of performance. For example, the Bahujan Samaj Party

(BSP) put up a decent performance in the State Legislative Assembly elections of 2007 when it secured 7.26 per cent of the valid votes polled. But it could not sustain this start when it faced the legislative elections in 2012 and 2017.

Yet another outstanding feature of Himachal Pradesh politics is its stability.²⁹ It can be credited to a host of factors like small and compact size of population, absence of glaring social cleavages of religion etc. and so on. One of the most influential factor when it comes to political stability is its well established two-party system.

Caste as an element in the politics in India is relatively rampant in the sense that it affects almost all the states' politics including the national politics. But the level at which caste penetrates the politics and vice-versa, the intensity with which the two co-exist and the expressions of the caste-politics equations are not uniform on pan-India level. That is to say, the relation of caste and politics tend to differ from state to state in terms of its manifestations.

Himachal Pradesh, similarly, has its own unique equation of caste and politics. Caste certainly has a say in the politics of the state but in its own way. The politics is generally colored by the competition for power between Rajputs and Brahmins and this competition between these two castes is helped by the acquiescence of Scheduled Castes (Sc).³⁰ This assertion can be substantiated in two phases. First, the competition for power between Rajputs and Brahmin community, and the second the acquiescence of the Dalits.

Himachal Pradesh has had six Chief Ministers till date in Yashwant Singh Parmar, Thakur Ram Lal, Shanta Kumar, Virbhadra Singh, Prem Kumar Dhumal and Jai Ram Thakur. Barring Shanta Kumar, all of them were/are from Rajput community and, it does not need mentioning that no Chief Minister has been either an SC or a Scheduled Tribe (ST). The struggle between the Rajputs and Brahmins is also present in inter-party

²⁹ In fact, The World Bank's report on Himachal Pradesh Scaling the Heights: Social Inclusion and sustainable development in Himachal Pradesh observed the political stability of Himachal Pradesh as one of the reasons for its commendable performance in socio-economic indicators.

³⁰ This is discussed in T. R. Sharma, "Local Configurations and National Parties in Himachal Pradesh." *Economic and Political Weekly* 34, no. 34/35 (1999): 2465-2471, and Ramesh K. Chauhan and S. N. Ghosh. "Bipolar Contest." *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, no. 51 (2004): 5504-5507.

structures in the state unit. For example, Yashwant Singh Parmar, a Rajput who was the first Chief Minister of the state and also the one to serve for the longest period, had to compete with his party man Pandit Padam Dev, a Brahmin, for the Chief Ministership. The same in-house battle was at display in the Congress again when Virbhadra Singh, a Rajput, and Sukhram Singh, a Brahmin, locked horns with each other for the leadership of the party. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) also showed the same instance when Prem Kumar Dhumal, a Rajput, and Shanta Kumar, a Brahmin, were engaged in a competition for the leadership within their own party.

This Rajput-Brahmin struggle for the power in the state is a testimony to the assertion that the Scheduled Castes (SC) have been left out from the race for top political positions. This is even more startling when one realizes that the one fourth of the state population is SC. A flash of hope for the Dalit politics in the state was seen when the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) put up a decent show in the assembly elections of 2007 by securing over seven per cent of the total valid votes. But it failed to replicate its performance first in 2012 and then in 2017. A dispassionate assessment of the decent performance of the BSP in the 2007 assembly elections would show that the election results were not the signs of an imminent rise of the Dalit politics in the state but was a result of the factional politics within the state Congress. It is held because the 2007 assembly elections campaign of the BSP was led by Vijay Singh Mankotia, who was earlier a Congressman of standing and had left Congress just before the elections due to his conflict with Virbhadra Singh. Thus, the BSP's performance was largely due to his own personality than to the BSP's appeal among the Dalits. Mankotia left the BSP after the elections of 2007, and thus depriving the BSP of his own vote bank and resultant poor performance of the BSP in subsequent assembly elections. Thus, one finds the Dalit politics to be simply absent in the state.

Another corner of the politics of Himachal Pradesh that deserves attention is the under-representation of the women in the politics. In terms of the Indian politics, this observation is oft-repeated but that does not take away its importance. The observation in relation to Himachal Pradesh is significant in one sense. Himachal Pradesh is one of the most developed Indian state among the states of its own type. But its development has not

completely converged with the political conditions of its women. That is, the Himachali women though have shared the fruits of the development but they still continue to be under-represented in the political sphere, especially in the State Legislative Assembly and in the Council of Minister. It has to be mentioned here that their participation in terms of voting is not subpar by any means.³¹ And, the under-representation stressed here is concerned only with the top political decision-making bodies.

Sr. No.	Year of Election	Total Seat	Number of Women Winners
1	1972	68	5
2	1977	68	1
3	1982	68	3
4	1985	68	3
5	1990	68	4
6	1993	68	4
7	1998	68	7
8	2003	68	4
9	2007	68	5
10	2012	68	3
11	2017	68	4

Source: Compiled by the author.

Going one step further, when one looks into the composition of the Council of Ministers, one extracts even more disappointing picture. There was no female Minister in the Council from 1952 to 1972. The BJP government in 2007 and 2017 inducted only one female as the Cabinet Minister in the form of Sarveen Chaudhary. Similarly, the

³¹ Bhawana Jharta, "Women in the Politics of Himachal Pradesh : An Analysis." *Himachal Pradesh University Journal*, 2012. She also maintains that the participation in the voting has been generally greater by women than the men.

Congress government incorporated Vidya Stokes as their only female face in the cabinet after winning the 2012 elections. In a Nutshell, the share of women in top political places in Himachal Pradesh is far from ideal.

The role of the lobbies in the politics of the state also warrants a mention. The three lobbies-orchardists, foresters and employees-have a considerable say in the politics, especially on the level of policy formulation. In addition to these factors, one cannot overlook the non-existence of communal politics in the state, primarily by the reason of the social compactness of the state population.³²

Next element that could be referred to in this chain of factors is the sub-regionalism in the politics of the state. This aspect of the state politics of Himachal Pradesh is the core idea that this study would investigate. Hence, an elaborate discussion of the factor is justified. Before discussing the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh, an understanding of the sub-regions in the state is necessary.

III

1. Sub-regions in Himachal Pradesh

While introducing the geographical fundamentals of Himachal Pradesh in the earlier parts of this chapter, the author has already stressed upon the need to recognize the non-uniformity of the geography of Himachal Pradesh in order to understand its society, economy and politics in a better way. The diversity of the geography within the state is not as mild as to go unexpressed. Rather, the cleavage is deep enough to be expressed in a notable pitch. In other words, the geographical and topographical diversity of the state produces different regions in the state. This intra-state geographical diversity of Himachal Pradesh thus expresses itself in the form of three distinct regions.

³² As per the census of India 2011, 11 out of the 12 districts in the state have Hindu majority and one district has Buddhist majority. 95.17% are Hindus and other religious communities are literally miniscule.

Taking Himachal Pradesh as a region, these intra-state geographical units/regions can be addressed as sub-regions. The three sub-regions are:

1. Tribal sub region or the tribal belt,
2. Upper sub region or the Upper Himachal and
3. Lower sub region or the Lower Himachal.

The tribal belt consists of the districts of Kinnaur, Lahaul-Spiti, some segments of district Chamba like Pangi and Bharmaur. This area is subjected to hostile topographical conditions. The climate is dry and extremely cold. It shares the larger portion of the area of Himachal Pradesh but is sparsely inhabited.

The 2nd sub region of the state is called the Upper Himachal Pradesh. It is inclusive of the districts of Shimla, Kullu, Sirmaur and Solan. Most of this area also comes under the temperate zone but it is relatively less dry, less hostile in terms of topography and more conducive for human habitation.

The third sub region is called the Lower Himachal Pradesh. It contains districts of Kangra, Hamirpur, Una, Bilaspur and Mandi, Chamba save the tribal area. It is mostly a sub-tropical area. it has relatively large tracts for agriculture and human settlement. It is densely peopled.

2. Nature of the Sub-Regions

The above mentioned three sub-regions-tribal belt, upper Himachal and the lower Himachal-are basically geographical sub-regions in the sense that the prime basis of this categorization is geographical differences among these three sub-regions. In other words, geography and the topography are the source of their distinct entities. Hence, these are geographical sub-regions.

But the importance of this geographical nature of the sub-regional categorization cannot be overemphasized. This is because the sub-regions would also qualify as socio-

cultural and economic sub-regions. The sub-regions have different climates and soil types. This difference is represented in their suitability for different crops. For instance, whereas the upper Himachal is suitable for horticulture, the lower Himachal is that for agriculture. Recognizing this variation in economic potential, scholars have also termed these sub-regions as agro-climatic sub-regions.³³

Similarly, these sub-regions would also qualify as socio-cultural sub-regions as the people of these sub-regions have developed fairly distinct life style corresponding to their geography. The social distinctiveness is most evident in terms of food-habits, clothes etc. Customs and rituals in marriage also vary in these sub-regions.

3. Sub-Regionalism in Himachal Pradesh

The sub-regions in Himachal Pradesh, as we have indicated earlier, dig out their separateness not only from geography but also from socio-cultural and economic sphere. Thus, the feeling of being somewhat different from others within Himachal Pradesh exists. This feeling of being different from the other results into an urge to stress the sub-regional identity. Geography, history, culture and economy becomes the basis of this separate and unique sub-regional identity. This sub-regional identity projects its different interests that usually conflict with that of the other sub-regional identity. This enters the political sphere and takes up the shape of sub regionalism. Now, here sub-regionalism is the phenomenon when people conduct their business in different walks of life, especially politics and economy, by making their sub region as an overarching element for commission and omissions of certain acts, demands, etc.

4. Sub-Regionalism in Himachal Pradesh: The Sub-regions That Matter

Ideas like sub regionalism do not exist in isolation. That is to say, it is necessary that one sub region projects itself in competition to other sub region or sub-regions. The

³³ Ashutosh, Kumar, "State Electoral Politics: Looking for the Larger Picture." *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 30 (2003): 3145-3147.

situation would be [unsub-regionallike] if one sub region projects itself in competition to no other sub-region.

Though Himachal Pradesh has three distinct sub-regions, only two of these figure in the discourse of sub regionalism in the state. These two are the Upper Himachal and the Lower Himachal. The discussion on sub-regionalism in the politics of the state invokes these two sub-regions. These two regions are represented by Shimla and Kangra. In popular parlance, these two regions are termed as old and new areas respectively. Claims and counterclaims-for resource distribution, political offices and representation, employment opportunities etc.-are made on the lines of these two sub-regions. This sub-regional affiliation or identification has played substantial role in the politics of the state, and it has best manifested itself in the arena of electoral politics.

5. Tribal Belt: Understanding the Relative Acquiescence

The areas forming the tribal belt-Kinnaur, Lahaul-Spiti, Pangi and Bharmaur-are situated in the North and North-East of the state. These are the most inaccessible and remotest parts of the state. These segments constitute the major chunk of the area of the state but is home to only a miniscule population. This sub region on its own do not stand in any meaningful competition against any of the two other sub-regions of Lower and Upper Himachal. Voicing the same opinion, Ramesh Kumar Verma observed that the tribal region due to extreme remote terrain and sparse population remains least influential in HP's politics in general. The same reasons can be attributed for its role as a poor third in the sub-regional politics in the state.

6. Lower and Upper Himachal Pradesh: Mapping the Broad Similarities

Competing parties have to have some commonalities. In the absence of these commonalities, the possibility of a competition would be thin. Similarly, the competing sub-regions in Himachal Pradesh, i.e. Lower and Upper Himachal Pradesh, have some similarities among them. First, they are the horizontal units of a larger unit. That is, they

are the parts of Himachal Pradesh and have an urge to make aggressive claims on the resources of the state.

Second, the two sub-regions do have meeting points in the sphere of society and culture. For example, almost common religion, some similarities in dialects, the Pahari identity etc. The two areas have faced similar problems in the sphere of economics for a long time. The convergence is also in the history when both the areas were ruled by the kings. Sometimes both the areas or some parts of the both areas also came under the same rule. Thus, one finds sufficient convergence between the two sub-regions.

7. Lower and Upper Himachal Pradesh: Mapping the Broad Dissimilarities

These two regions, i.e., upper and lower Himachal or Shimla and Kangra region drew their peculiarities from topographic-features, colonial history, agro-ecology, economic relations, dialect-linguistic, socio-culture webbing etc. Some of these are mentioned in the coming paragraphs.

The areas which fall in the Lower Himachal were the parts of the British India unlike the areas of Upper Himachal which were under the indirect control of the British via the direct control of the princely states. This difference in historical experience had subtle differentiating influence on these areas. Its consequences included the creation of different kind of political subjects in the Upper and Lower area in terms of their political awareness, level of expectation, outlook towards the state etc.

Next, these two areas are totally different agro-climatic zones. The Lower area is relatively plain and less rugged. It has relatively more cultivable land. But it is densely populated and hence the size of landholdings is small. Thus, due to the small-landholding pattern and sub-tropical climate primarily cultivated the food crops. Thus, it came to be known as the agriculture belt of the state. On the other hand, the Upper Himachal has rugged terrain, and it is not favorable for the cultivation of food crops. the Upper areas have relatively larger landholding pattern and conducive climate conditions for horticulture and has undertaken the path of the intensive commercial agro-production.

This area invested into the horticulture production, and thus came to be regarded as the horticulture belt of the state. This has resulted into the rapid increase in wealth of the people of Upper area whereas Lower area with its people remains deprived of such benefits.

One can also mention the difference in terms of the dialects. Despite all the claims of linguistic homogeneity at the time of merger in 1966, it is a fact that the Pahari is not a language like Hindi, English, Tamil etc. in the sense that unlike these languages it is a group of dialects. The Pahari dialects spoken in the Kangrah valley are substantially different from what is spoken in the Shimla region. The Kangri is in more affinity with the Punjabi than what is spoken in Shimla region.

Also, the kind of Hindu religion practiced in Shimla is of different hue than the kind of Hinduism practiced in Kangra. Whereas the Upper areas mainly have their own localized deities that are worshipped, the Lower areas worship the mainstream deities like Durga, Shiva, Kali etc.

Last but certainly not the least, elections since 1966 and pattern of recruitment of leaders in the two main political parties in state show that the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), now the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has been formidable in the Lower areas and the Congress has been enjoying this status in the Upper areas. This aspect, i.e. entrenchment of the bi-party system in the state and the respective fortresses of the both parties, has also captured the imagination of the political scientists.

Chapter 3

Sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh: Manifestation, Causes, and Uniqueness

Abstract

The chapter is arranged under four main parts. The first part concerns the manifestations of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh. An account of what we label as the climax of sub-regionalism opens this part and is followed by the manifestations in the sphere of election campaigns and electoral results. A discussion on the prevalent linguistic constructs is provided as a sample of social manifestations of sub-regional perspective of the people. The second part provides a description of the causes of sub-regionalism through four arguments. The 1966 merger as an event which introduced some new faultlines in the state, the divergence in economic spheres at different levels, the role of electoral politics in politicizing the sub-regional differences and the existence of two different colonial histories in the state have been extended as four main causes of sub-regionalism. The next two parts talk about the two phases and uniqueness of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh respectively.

I

1. Sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh: The Manifestations

Sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh has been resurfacing in almost every Assembly election since 1967 in one way or the other. The phenomenon reached its climax in the year of 1990. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) under Shanta Kumar formed the government in the state after the Assembly elections of 1990. In the month of July and August 1990, there were unprecedented widespread agitations in the apple belt of the state. Shimla, Kulu and Mandi are the major districts of apple belt. The agitation came to be known as the apple agitation.¹ Gradually, it acquired sub-regional character.² Initially, it was basically aimed at increasing the Minimum Support Price for the apple from existing Rs. 2.25 per kg to Rs. 5 per kg. Despite the relentless pressure, the government did not yield to the demands of horticulturalists. The agitation turned violent and some people lost their lives. It is at this point when the agitation turned sub-regional in its feeling. The agitators started attacking the people of lower area who were living in the apple belt.³ The reason for these targeted attacks on the people of lower areas was the perception that the BJP was primarily a party of the lower area. Besides, it was also headed by a man from the lower area, Shanta Kumar. It was held that the government is impartial in the favor of the lower area and hence was not enhancing the Minimum Support Price for the apple as the apple belt belonged to the upper areas. The significance of this violent agitation can be gauged from the fact that the government had to call in the army for restoring the peace. Army subsequently marched in the streets and eventually

¹Shimla rape-murder: Kotkhai protests rival the 1990 apple agitation, Hindustan Times. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/shimla-rape-murder-kotkhai-protests-rival-the-1990-apple-agitation/story-uYzPIfKGAXpQ8WxBHoOOyM.html>

² Ramesh Kumar Verma, the most recognized writer on the issue in Himachal Pradesh, termed this event as an “ugly turn” in Himachali sub-regionalism. Ramesh Kumar Verma, *Preface: Regionalism and Sub-regionalism in State Politics: Social, Economic and Political Bases*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1994, XI.

³ Ibid

succeeded in restoring the order. But the damage was already done. The events had already irreparably vitiated the emotional environment of the state. This agitation has been the most expressive manifestation of the sub-regionalism till date in the state.

The sub-regional representation of the state is most repetitively and visibly manifested in the sphere of electoral politics. Election campaigns of the political parties—mainly the BJP and the Congress—have every now and then taken the sub-regional undertones. Most palpable evidences came from the elections campaigns of the BJS/BJP, especially during the decades of 1970s and 1980s. During this phase, the BJS labelled charges against the Congress for discriminating against the lower areas in favor of the upper areas. It was argued that the Congress was basically a party of the old areas. The fact that all the Chief Ministers that were provided by the successive Congress governments were from the upper areas was advanced as one of the proofs for this assertion.⁴ The solution suggested by the party to the people of lower areas was to elect a government that would provide a Chief Minister from the lower areas. And, it was maintained that this could be achieved only if the BJS/BJP is voted to power in the state. As a logical follow-up of its arguments, the BJS/BJP projected Shanta Kumar, a leader from the lower areas, as its Chief Ministerial candidate.⁵ In addition to this, during election campaigns, one also witnesses the promises made by the both political parties to rapidly develop the lower areas and rectify whatever regional imbalance exists in the state. This they (the political parties) chart to do by opening up new Universities in the lower area,⁶ transferring already existing government institutes from upper areas to the lower areas, etc. The demand to make Dharamshala the second capital of the state that would be a winter capital was also put forward in one of such election campaigns.

Another sphere where the sub-regionalism manifested itself to some extent was in the electoral results of state Assembly. The trend was at display wherein one sub-region

⁴ Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar, Ram Lal Thakur and Virbhadra Singh, all of the Congress Chief Ministers hailed from the upper area.

⁵ Prof. Prem Kumar Dhumal, the next face of the BJP after Shanta Kumar was also from the lower area. Dhumal was again declared as the Chief Ministerial candidate for the 2017 assembly elections, but he lost his assembly election and hence could not lead the BJP government.

⁶ For example, the Central University of Himachal Pradesh has been opened in the lower area.

will prefer one party over the other. This region-based preference gradually developed into one of the main characteristics of the politics of the state. Over the time, the lower areas came to be regarded as the traditional bastion of the BJP and the upper areas that of the Congress.⁷ This equation, however, has witnessed some erosion in recent times.⁸

2. The social manifestations of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh

One of the most important and interesting manifestation area for the sub-regional feeling is the social sphere. It is not viable here to investigate the entire social domain for understanding sub-regional expressions. Therefore, the sub-domain of the social domain that we will engage in here for understanding the manifestations of sub-regionalism is the domain of linguistic constructs. The vocabulary of addressing and naming used in informal and routine life by the people of upper Himachal for the people of lower Himachal and vice-versa is what is termed 'linguistic construct' in this study. These linguistic constructs can be seen as a medium of expressing the prejudices that the people of upper and lower area had against each other.⁹ Usage of the phrase linguistic construct is favored over prejudices and stereotypes as the latter two carry a value judgment with them, and we prefer to avoid, as far as feasible, any valuational approach. These linguistic constructs form the axis of the analysis of the social expressions of sub-regionalism here. The purpose is not to investigate the rationality or irrationality of these constructs.

The information used in this section is based upon the participant observation of the author. Here, the linguistic constructs, used to name, address and describe the people of other areas, can be looked at from two sides- in -group view, i.e., views of people

⁷ Prem R. Bhardwaj, "Himachal Pradesh Elections: An Analysis." *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 2 (2008): 13-16.

⁸ In the sense of neither area preferring one party at the cost of the exclusion of the other party. But, this is a recent trend, and we here are dealing with the decades of 1970s and 1980s when the preference was loud and clear.

⁹ Sharma, "Local Configurations and National Parties in Himachal Pradesh." *Economic and Political Weekly* 34, no. 34/35 (1999): 2466.

about themselves, and out-group, i.e., views of people about people of other areas. Assigning some names to an out-group is a part of determining the direction in which in-group naming would be done. Therefore, the way in which an out-group is named and addressed will indicate the way in which an in-group perceives itself and will ideally want others to perceive it. We shall first discuss the linguistic constructs used by the people of lower areas for the people of upper areas, and then we shall follow it with a discussion of how the people of upper area imagine people of lower area through their invented linguistic constructs for the latter.

2.1 Some Linguistic constructs for the people of upper area

There are many linguistic constructs or the names which are used for the people of upper area by the people of lower area. These include *Khaddu*, *Paharhi* etc. In addition, the USA and J&K are also two such titles which are sometimes used to refer to the upper area. We shall pause on these titles for a moment and try to understand them.

The word *Khaddu* comes with a pejorative connotation. Its literal meaning is ‘sheep’.¹⁰ As to why this word is used for the people of upper area, we can extend four probable reasons which may be considered the propellant for this naming. First, these people were in the vocation of rearing cattle in the past and sheep was one of the most visible livestock that they had. Second, the extensive visibility and importance of sheep in the lives of these people is not confined to vocation only. It is used for meat purposes; it also finds a substantial place in their festivals. Third, sheep are generally considered to be comfortable in scaling the mountainous trails. And forth, sheep are thought of having not-so-good sense of the things.

Initial two of these four statements can be clubbed together on the basis of their underlying nature as they emphasize the large space that sheep hold in the lives of these people. And the latter two statements can also be clubbed into one as these two statements try to emphasize the similarities in some specific endowments of sheep and these people. In short, it is perhaps due to these two larger reasons-sheep holding

¹⁰ In the *Paharhi* spoken in the upper areas.

considerable space in their lives and supposed convergence of endowments-that the people of this area are called *Khaddu*.

Pahari (of mountains) is also one such noun which is used for these people. It is, surprisingly, considered to be derogatory. Ideally speaking, it should not be negatively charged as it is simply a derivative of the living place of the people into their naming by others. Perhaps it is made negative due to the stereotypes attached with the image of a *Paharhi*. It is now negativized to the extent that people generally dislike being termed as *Paharhi*, although they are the people who live on and around *Paharhs*(mountains). An interesting thing to note is this that *Paharhi* is a relative thing in the sense that the people of lower Himachal would call the people of upper Himachal as *Paharhi*, and the people of the adjoining states(Haryana and Punjab) will term all of *Himachalis* as *Paharhis*. Sometimes it is also seen that the people of adjoining states of Haryana and Punjab who happen to live on the border areas of their respective states, touching Himachal, are also termed as *Paharhi* by the people living in plainer areas. All the while it is uttered in a sense as if referring to someone who is essentially inferior to the one who utters the word.

Then we have the usage of the USA and J&K for the upper area. Before laying out the possible reasons for usage of these expressions, there are a couple of important things to be noted. First, the people using these analogies, as it is not difficult to see, are primarily in the institution of higher education, for instance, in Himachal Pradesh University. Second, these labels seem to bring no apparent derogatory meaning with them. Third, these are used for geographical entities unlike the earlier two linguistic constructs of *Khaddu* and *Paharhi* which are used for the people. Forth, these two words instead of referring to the entire upper area refer to only some parts of upper area which fall in the district Shimla.

As to what may be the possible reasons for these expressions, we can only think of economic reasons. District Shimla is generally considered to be populated by relatively wealthy people, hence the expression of the USA. The usage of the expression J&K is more real than the expression of the USA in couple of senses: first, it is grammatically correct as it is used as an acronym for two places in the district Shimla called Jubbal and Kotkhai. It is more real as it tells something more than the abundance of wealth. It tells

about the nature of economy of Jubbal and Kotkhai by drawing connections with the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir is the largest producer of apple in the country with its 70% share in the total national apple production and similarly Jubbal and Kotkhai are vastly rich in their apple production. Thus, it underscores a continuation in the nature of economies.

2.2 Some Linguistic Constructs for the People of Lower Area

There are two expressions used for the people of lower area by the people of upper area which we shall mention here. The first one is *Mistri* and the second is *Kangri*.

In North India, the term *Mistri* is generally used for mechanics. It is also used for the people working as masons. As to what may be the possible understanding of people for using this linguistic construct for lower *Himachalis*, we can think of these reasons. First, people of lower area are thought to be traditionally involved in the profession of mason. Second, it is thought that they possess the crafty, cunning and manipulateness of masons (the underlying assumption is this that these traits are constitutive of a mason). It is clear that this linguistic construct of mason imagines a lower *Himachalis* on two different level-first concrete level, i.e., from her profession, and, second on abstract level, i.e., from traits which constitute that profession.

The second interesting expression used for the people of lower Himachal is *Kangri*. It is loaded with negative connotation. The author is more confident in writing about this expression as it is in wider use than the previous expression of mason, and its frequent usage, the contexts in which it is used and the tone of its usage makes this expression far more easily accessible to the faculty of understanding. Though the adjective of *Kangri* is inspired from Kangra district which is one of the districts of lower Himachal, but it is used for all the people of lower Himachal in general. This will not appear as a problem if we realize that the districts of lower Himachal, i.e., Una, Hamirpur and Kangra, all earlier constituted the composite district of Kangra. This can also be interpreted as indicating the overarching influence of district Kangra in lower Himachal.

As for the intended meaning of this linguistic construct, we can say that it is not primarily used, if at all, to signify one's area of domicile. Rather it is intended to signify

hard-fisted and stingy traits of one's nature and behavior. One's nature and behavior as its target becomes evident when we realize that it is sometimes used even for those who do not have anything to do with the lower Himachal at all. For instance, it is, occasionally, even targeted at the persons living in upper Himachal.

Let us now juxtapose the linguistic constructs and sub-regionalism. As a matter of fact, the areas-lower and upper Himachal-which are used here to study the linguistic constructs and the areas which are party to sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh are contiguous. We recognize that these linguistic constructs do not occur in isolation, i.e., they are certainly influenced and in turn influence other domains of reality like economy and politics. The same is true for the phenomenon of sub-regionalism. We intend to understand how these two relate to each other.

The interplay between the phenomenon of sub-regionalism and linguistic constructs can be studied by asking these questions-

- a. Do the linguistic constructs serve as an evidence of sub-regional divide?
- b. Does the weakening of both in recent time shows a complementarity between them?

Phenomenon like sub-regionalism always contains some forms of prejudices and stereotype of the 'other'. And, these linguistic constructs are examples and creators of prejudice and stereo-types. These linguistic constructs should not be considered completely aloof and innocent. Rather, their politics should be unearthed. And, their politics becomes clear when one tries to see them in relation to the larger phenomenon of sub-regionalism. It becomes evident that they perform a crucial function of constructing the image of other, someone different from oneself, preferably in pejorative sense. Put differently, these linguistic constructs undertake the process of 'othering' of some people and area, which contributes to the construction of a sub-regional identity. Thus, these linguistic constructs can be termed as the manifestation of sub-regionalism.

II

1. Sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh: An Investigation into Causes

The phenomena like regionalism and sub-regionalism depend upon the perception of us versus they between two or more entities. This perception is in turn based upon the element of difference and dissimilarities between the concerned entities. The difference may flow from one or more sources. That is, difference may be located in multiple aspects of human life. We would use this line of argument to explore the reasons behind sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh. In the approaching sections we introduce different spheres of human life in which the dissimilarities and differences between the old Himachal Pradesh and new Himachal Pradesh would be investigated. The similarities between the two areas are not the focal point of the chapter as it is dissimilarities, not the similarities, that serve as a cause of sub-regionalism. Therefore, similarities, where ever mentioned, will be utilized for the clarity of argument instead of being the core of the argument. This will be the general approach to study the causes of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh. The spheres that would be taken for an analysis of differences between the two regions are economic, socio-cultural, historical, etc.

Sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh, just like elsewhere, is a phenomenon propelled by multiple factors. It is at once political, economic, social, geographic and also historic in terms of the factors that lie beneath it. Thus, a comprehensive understanding of the causes of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh would require us to investigate its underlying structure from above mentioned multiple directions. The approach that we would adopt in the forthcoming section can be termed as holism as contrasted with reductionism. The former strives to study a phenomenon as a whole. By that we mean that all the constituent parts of a whole would be studied in relation to each other. On the other hand, reductionism chooses to reduce the investigation to a single constituent part for understanding the problem at hand., Following this perspective, we would resist the temptation to overemphasis the economic and political reasons at the cost of socio-cultural, historic and geographic features. In this sense, a holistic perspective is taken.

One can also visualize the causes of sub-regionalism as having their origin in either of the two sides of the 1966 merger, i.e., before and after the merger. Putting it differently, there were some features of both areas at the time of the merger of 1966, and thus can be classified as having their origin in pre-1966 time. On the other hand, some other features unfolded gradually during the phase of post-1966. Keeping in mind this characterization of the different types of factors on the basis of their period of origin can help in a superior understanding of the causes of sub-regionalism. It is important to mention that the factors that were present at the time of merger and that evolved after the merger were not exclusive in their operation and influence. Quite contrary, they reinforced each other.

2. The Merger of 1966 – Introduction of New fault lines

Himachal Pradesh, as we argued earlier in the work, has gained its present shape and status over a long gestation period. The gestation period so to speak, of the present-day Himachal Pradesh unfolded on two fronts. First front concerned with its status in the Union of India. That is, it evolved from a Centrally Administered Province to a Part ‘C’ state to a Union territory to a full-fledged state of India. The second front, on the other hand, witnessed constant changing and chopping of its boundaries. The boundaries were subjected to basically two types of changes. First kind of changes in the boundaries were those that took place within the state, aimed at more coherent administrative organization of the units of the state.¹¹ Second kind of changes that the boundaries underwent were related to the outward expansion of the state boundaries.¹² In other words, it was the process wherein the state boundaries, not the boundaries of the units of the state, got expanded. The merger of 1966, that shall be dealt next, relates to the second type.

¹¹Such churnings of the boundaries happened in 1960 when district Kinnor was carved out of Mahasu districts and in 1971 when district Solan was carved out from Mahasu district and Mahasu district was renamed Shimla district. Via the same readjustment of 1971, two new districts of Hamirpur and Una were carved out of Kangra district.

¹² Such amendments in the boundaries took place in 1954 and 1971. The then separate state of Bilaspur was merged with Himachal Pradesh in 1954 and Kangra district of Punjab was merged with Himachal Pradesh in 1971.

It is our argument that the 1966 merger of the hilly portions of Punjab in Himachal Pradesh was an important event¹³ that in the long run turned out to be the chief cause of sub-regionalism in the state.¹⁴ Prior to this merger, the state was largely a compact unit. The merger of 1954, through which Bilaspur was merged with Himachal Pradesh, did not stir its compactness. It was compact in the sense of economy, society, colonial experience, etc. Geographically, it was mainly a hilly terrain; economically, a horticulture and forestry dominated economy with negligible presence of agriculture; socially, it comprised pure *Paharhi* people; and colonial experience-wise, it was constituted by the princely states which were under the indirect influence of British, as opposed to being under the direct rule of British.

But the merger of 1966, which saw the union of some parts of Punjab with Himachal, altered the composition of the state in many respects. The merged areas were collectively known as new areas, and the areas to which they were added, that is, areas constituting Himachal of pre-merger time, were known as old areas. The causes of this merger, among other things, have also been discussed in detail in previous sections of this work. This merger was the most significant event of its kind in the history of the state since the formation of Himachal Pradesh in 1948. The faultlines and alterations that were effectuated by this merger were in the domain of geography, economy, society, , history, expectations from the state, etc. The hitherto almost geographically consistent state of Himachal Pradesh was now transformed into a fairly geographically diverse state. Now it was no longer a hilly state in exact sense. Rather, the new areas that were incorporated in the state were less hilly, more even and with moderate slopes. The new areas generally were more of semi-mountainous nature than purely mountainous category. The merger was also a factor which installed some remarkable changes in the economy of Himachal Pradesh. Until now, Himachal Pradesh was a state with strong horticulture and forestry sector. It did not hold considerable industries. Moreover, the agriculture was also not the most dominant sector. This structure of the economy of Himachal Pradesh was largely

¹³ According to Sharma, it constituted the watershed in the history of Himachal Pradesh. Sharma, "Observations on Himachal Politics." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (1987): 494.

¹⁴ Sharma again hold that the merger "brought in its wake more complex problems". Sharma, *Observations on*, 1987, 496.

shaped and decided by its natural premises. To use other words, the economic structure of state was determined by its geography. It had vast forests and suitable climatic conditions for pursuing a horticulture driven economy. But the merger meant a change in this economic structure of the state. New areas were, as observed above, different from the old areas in its geography. The natural premises of these areas, in other words, was different from that of the old areas. Not only these areas were not suitable for horticulture, but they also had some other economic problems, that were largely absent or ignorable on account of mildness in the old areas. The problems that are being referred were small landholdings on account of relatively denser population, rampant but non-remunerative agriculture, the largely impoverish people, etc. Given all these conditions, the economic structure of the old areas was neither present nor feasible in these new areas. Thus, the old and new areas were different in their present economic status, problems and potentials.¹⁵ The merger was also a diversifying experience for Himachal Pradesh in social sense. Though the old and new areas were both referred to as *Paharhi* in common parlance, but they too had some societal differences, that could assign them some social otherness. The differences were traceable in language, rituals and customs, etc. The language spoken in the old areas and new areas were clubbed together as *Paharhi*. But, this is an inexact characterization of the reality as the language and dialects spoken in the old areas were not similar to their counterpart in the new areas. One would suggest that the language and dialect spoken in the new areas were deeply influenced by the long contact with Punjab and hence had *Punjabi* influence. The new areas, speaking in societal connotations, were less self-contained than the old areas. It meant that language, dialects and other expressions of social life of these areas were relatively more influenced by the external world. Putting differently, the society of the old areas was more native than the new areas. Yet another significant difference between the societies of the old and new areas was that whereas the old areas had their unique system of worship called the *Deota* system, the new areas had the mainstream worship system of Hinduism wherein Shiva, Vishnu, Durga etc. Held the central stage. Another spectacle of difference could be observed in the customs followed in nuptial ceremonies in both areas.

¹⁵ Voicing this observation, one writer maintains “Infrastructural needs of the two economies are quite different”. Sharma, *Local Configurations*, 1999, 2469.

The foregoing discussion brings the fact to the light that it was the merger of 1966 that significantly diversified Himachal Pradesh in terms of geography, economy, society etc. It has to be stated here that the being of differences between the two areas did not automatically triggered the sub-regional feelings in the people. Rather, this existence of differences was the raw material for the sub-regional feelings that was utilized by other factors to kindle the sub-regional feelings. The factors that cooked this raw material to prepare the sub-regional dish were the ambition of political parties, some of the policies and actions of the state, etc. These elements would be taken up for a detailed discussion in other sections.

It would not be inappropriate to mention here that though this merger inflicted some complications in the existence of Himachal Pradesh, but it was an event which also generated some essential relief points. It furthered the goal of achieving full-fledged statehood for Himachal Pradesh as it was now a more substantial unit of India in terms of geography, demography and economy. In fact, this merger was a necessary stepping-stone to what Himachal Pradesh accomplished for itself in 1971. The achieving of statehood would have been a distant dream if not for this merger. In this sense the 1966 merger was a necessary evil for the state of Himachal Pradesh.

3. Economic causes for Sub-regionalism

The 1966 merger clubbed the hilly Punjab with Himachal Pradesh. The Himachal Pradesh of pre-merger was now popularly assigned the designation of old Himachal Pradesh and the areas joining via merger were assigned the collective noun of new Himachal Pradesh. These two areas were, economically speaking, hugely different from each other in many respects. First the areas were at different stages of development. Second, their problems and potentials were also not same. And, third, the areas had different economic needs and expectations. Let us discuss each of these three facets in some detail.

The old and new Himachal Pradesh were at different stages of development. By this assertion we mean whereas the old Himachal Pradesh had taken up the commercial

and hugely remunerative horticulture practices, the new Himachal Pradesh was still engrossed in largely a subsistence agriculture.¹⁶ The former could be characterized as a modernist practice and the latter as medieval type. The horticulture could be labelled as modernist as it was solely profit motivated and required wide-scale application of modern science and technology. The agriculture performed in the new areas, on the other hand, could be termed medieval as it was not driven by market, involved minimum risk and did not bank upon any considerable amount of application of modern science and technology. Thus, it would not be any exaggeration to maintain that the old areas were at a superior stage of development than the new areas. This disparity of the stages of economic development in these two areas could be understood if one briefly looks at their immediate history of last two decades.

The old area was a separate administrative unit in the time period of 1948 to 1966. It got expanded with the merger of 1954 when Bilaspur was merged with it. In its journey till 1966 it was in the avatars of a Chief Commissioner Province, a category-C state and a Union Territory. This period of almost two decades saw Himachal Pradesh adopting a unique economic development strategy for itself. The strategy was based upon three important pillars. A focused attention to the development of infrastructure in general and roads in particular was the first pillar.¹⁷ The second was the development of Hydroelectric projects and the third one was the emphasis on rapid growth and expansion of horticulture sector. This strategy was designed and implemented under the dedicated leadership of Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar, the first chief Minister of the state. The cause was helped by the consistent generous aid of the centre. The socio-religious compactness of Himachal Pradesh also meant it had the luxury of not having those social contradictions that shook most of Indian states and rendered development process sluggish. As a result, Himachal Pradesh soon became one of the most developed hilly state of India.

¹⁶ It is due to this difference that the upper area widely came to be known as the horticulture-belt and the lower area as agriculture-belt.

¹⁷For example, about 50 per cent of the first five-year plan was directed towards the development of road infrastructure in the state.

On the other hand, the new area was a part of Punjab. It was situated in the periphery of Punjab in geographic and economic sense.¹⁸ It was a unique subset under the state of Punjab in the sense that Punjab hardly had any other hilly region than this region. This uniqueness of the area required a unique approach for its development as the development strategy used for the plains of Punjab could not succeed in these areas. But this did not materialize and the Punjab Hills were increasingly left behind in the race of development. As a consequence of two-decade long neglect, the economy of the area did not develop with the changing time. In addition to this, Punjab of that time was a diverse state in terms of socio-religious life. There was a long-fought battle going on for a separate Sikh dominated *Suba*. Hindu and Sikh became two important themes in politics of that time Punjab. Punjab Hills, with which we are concerned, had a sizeable Hindu population. This area was also drawn into the politics of Sikhs and Hindus. All this upheaval meant that the state was not free of distractions from the path of development. Punjab Hills also had to bear the cost of this social tumult by not receiving adequate economic attention.

Thus, we could easily see how the two areas-old and new Himachal Pradesh-had completely different trajectory of History in independent India. This difference was qualitative in nature. Both the regions developed different modes of production. The old Himachal Pradesh had capital and labor-intensive horticulture and the new Himachal Pradesh had a purely labor-intensive agriculture. Clubbing together of two regions that are at different junctures of history in terms of their development creates an economic discord. This is exactly what transpired with the merger of 1966 in Himachal Pradesh. The developed and underdeveloped units were merged and it meant an economically imbalanced new shape of Himachal Pradesh. It was the event where modern and medieval met. Using a poetic expression, it was a couple generated through the union of two incommensurate entities. Thus, it is sufficiently clear that the both regions were not at the same stage in terms of the development journey.

¹⁸ Sharma, *Local Configurations*, 1999, 2466.

This first major economic difference was closely related to the second major difference of the regions having two different sets of problems and potentials. The old area faced the challenging task of improving the infrastructure. Since its inception in 1948, developing infrastructure has always been a challenging task for Himachal Pradesh despite its focused attention to this sector. This is on account of the cost involved in creating the new infrastructure and maintaining the already constructed infrastructure in an extremely hilly rugged terrain. Another challenge was to keep the horticulture sector of the state competitive and profit yielding. This was a challenge as it necessitated a huge financial and technical assistance to the sector by the state. The technical and financial assistance provided by the state was in the shape of delivering subsidies on the equipments and fertilizers required for a robust production. The procurement guarantee by the state in the case of bumper crop and provision of Minimum support Price (MSP) for the apple producers was also a bulky financial demand on the state. The economy of old Himachal Pradesh also contained a large opportunities in the sector of tourism. Hence, development of tourism sector was also a challenge for this area. The region had vast potential in the Hydro-Electric projects (HEP) sector and its sustainable development was also a major task ahead for the region. On the other hand, the new area had its different set of challenges and opportunities. The region had small landholdings which were not remunerative. These were not economically sustainable. The region also had potential for its share of horticulture production in the area of citrus fruits. But shifting from agriculture to horticulture production is not a natural progress as it does not happen automatically. Rather, it requires a change in the attitude. The change that is referred here is from a risk-averse to a risk-taking attitude. By this we mean that the horticulture is a risk-laden adventure when compared to traditional farming. Moreover, the prerequisite for successful horticulture practice is the readiness to adopt the latest know-how available in the area. In addition to this, the horticulture has a considerably longer gestation period in comparison to agriculture. That is, the first harvest of the horticulture takes at least about five years. This is a long period during which small and marginal farmers might find extremely difficult to sustain themselves. Due to all these reasons, the shift from horticulture to agriculture requires the state to handhold the farmers. It was thus a huge challenge for the region. The new region also craved for a concerted effort for developing

infrastructure. It did not have the Hydro-Electric capacity like the old Himachal Pradesh. It had the potential for industrial development but that was a neglected domain up to now. Thus, we can see how the two regions in 1966 had quite different economic challenges and opportunities.

This leads us to the discussion of the third major economic disparity in the state. This was on the level of perception. The new Himachal Pradesh, which was earlier Punjab Hills, joined Himachal Pradesh with the hopes of receiving extra-attention of the state in the areas of development. It had also witnessed how the old Himachal Pradesh had rapidly developed in about last two decades. Thus, its own status of un-development and old Himachal Pradesh's status of development coupled to create the expectation for larger share of the resources of the state. On the other hand, the old Himachal Pradesh did not visualize the situation in this fashion. It saw both the regions as equals and thus giving both equal resources.

The foregoing discussion on the economic differences between the old Himachal Pradesh and the new Himachal Pradesh makes it clear that there existed economic reasons on which both the regions could develop the feelings of us versus them. Regionalism and sub-regionalism, after all, are the phenomena that revolve on the pivot of difference. This economic difference between these two entities created the condition which developed the phenomenon of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh.

4. Differences Drawn from Colonial History

Present day Himachal Pradesh did not receive a uniform treatment from the colonial masters. The treatment handed out to the hill states by the British was basically of two types. In the first type, they included some hill states in the British empire and hence these hill states came under the direct rule of British. The areas of new Himachal Pradesh received this gesture from the British. The second kind of treatment that was executed by the British in relation to the hill states was to leave the hill states to rule themselves. British still held some control over these states but by and large they were autonomous. These states were thus under the indirect control of the British. Most of the

states that now fall in the area of old Himachal Pradesh received this treatment. This variation of treatment at the hands of British meant that old and new Himachal Pradesh were not at same page in relation to their contacts with British. The former was less close than the latter. It also meant that both regions would not have same kind of place and role in the national movement. It was but natural that the place where British ruled directly will be more drenched in national movement than the place where British control was only indirect. Thus, the new Himachal Pradesh figured more prominently in the national movement than the old Himachal Pradesh. The hill areas that were under the indirect control of British did not experience these forces. These hill states were rather closed type of system where the subject was politically less active. These were important historical variations with momentous repercussions for the future post-independence times. This meant that the political culture and the political subject of these two areas would not be same, at least in the initial years post-1966 merger. This difference meant that the people of the old and new Himachal Pradesh had different kind of orientation in terms of their methods of approaching the state, expectations from the state and methods to arrive at political agendas. It would not be a non-fact to state that the first hand colonial experience of the people of the new Himachal Pradesh made them slightly more confident and assertive when compared to the people of old Himachal Pradesh. This factor certainly contributed to the generation of the sense of us versus them in the people of Himachal Pradesh. This, in conjunction with other factors, became a factor behind sub-regionalism.

5. The Role of Electoral Politics in the Rise of Sub-regionalism

It is true that the merger of 1966 inaugurated some aspects in Himachal Pradesh which later contributed to the rise of sub-regionalism. But the real shape and push to sub-regional feeling in the state was provided by the electoral politics of the state post-1966.¹⁹

¹⁹ Sharma maintains that the physiographic and the demographic factors have come to exercise considerable influence on the politics of the state particularly on its electoral politics. The physiographic and demographic factors that he is referring to became of such importance for electoral politics only after this merger. Sharma, *Local Configurations*, 1999, 2465.

This particular element played a decisive role in the origin and spread of sub-regionalism. This part explains how the electoral politics in the state after 1966, in which the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bhartiya Jana Sangh (later the Bhartiya Janata Party) were two important players, became the single most important propellant factor for sub-regionalism in the state. To appreciate it, we first necessarily need to develop a sketchy-description of the electoral landscape of pre-1966 Himachal Pradesh. That will allow us to elaborate on the electoral politics post-1966 and see how the merger created the conditions for a kind of electoral politics that contributed to the rise of sub-regionalism in the state.

The electoral politics in Himachal Pradesh before 1966 was simply dominated by the Indian National Congress (INC). The party managed to pull off three consecutive victories in 1951-52, 1957 and 1962. The first elections to the state legislative Assembly of Himachal Pradesh (as a category-C state) were conducted in 1951-52 in which the Congress garnered absolute majority and made government under the leadership of Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar. In 1957, the second elections took place. These elections were for the Territorial Council. The Congress again emerged as the biggest party and Karm Singh Thakur headed the Congressmen this time. The elections of 1962 were meant for the Legislative Assembly of the state in which the Congress again emerged triumphant and Dr Parmar again came to the helm of the government. The main features of the electoral politics of this time were-

1. Absolute dominance of the Indian National Congress and corresponding rather meek presence of other parties. The failure was suffered by all other national parties and state-based parties.
2. Also, these elections did not throw up any formidable opposition.

The dominance of the Congress can be accredited to a number of reasons. First, the party had its support base across the various classes in the state. By this we mean that the Congress was not only able to win the support of masses but also of the erstwhile rulers. This seemingly ironical support-base across the social canvas was grabbed by the Congress via a carefully designed policy of movement and accommodation. Pursuing the policy of movement in the pre-1947 period, the Congress not only lent its recognition to

the Prajamandal movement in the princely states but also aided Prajamandal movement organizationally. This meant that the people of the princely states, along with their popular leaders, were charmed by the Congress. The co-option of the leaders of the Prajamandal movement was completed when after independence most of the leaders of the Prajamandal movement joined Congress. For example, Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar and Pandit Padam Dev, two of the most powerful popular leaders in Himachal Pradesh, were such leaders from Himachal Pradesh who followed this path. The party also secured the support of erstwhile rulers via a successful power-sharing with them within the organization of the Congress.

The electoral politics of the state underwent a substantial modification with the merger of 1966. The alteration that we are pointing towards include the destruction of the dominance of the Congress and electoral maturation of the BJS (later the BJP) as an alternative of the Congress. In other words, here onwards the people of the state had the options of two political parties as compared to the compulsion of one party. An added important change was manifested in the nature of electoral issues. A range of issues having their origin in the cleavage of old and new Himachal Pradesh at this time acquired a sort of permanency in the electoral politics.

The Bhartiya Jana Sangh, which has not been able to win any substantial number of seats in Assembly until then, was able to strengthen itself in electoral realm. The Assembly election outcomes, starting from the 1967 elections, bear witness to the rapid rise of the BJS in the electoral politics of Himachal Pradesh. This rise was in simultaneity with the gradual decline in the electoral influence of the Congress. This electoral competition between the BJS (later the BJP) and the Congress later evolved into a bipolar scenario in the state. Proof to this is the fact that since 1972 Assembly elections, no political party could repeat its government in the state. Putting differently, there has been a regular change in government in every Assembly elections since the election of 1972.

Our quest in this section is to investigate the rise of sub-regionalism with the rise of the BJS. The BJS failed to breach the stronghold of the Congress since 1952. The BJS saw in the merger an opportunity to strongly establish itself in the electoral politics of the state. It made the new areas the launching-pad for its electoral ambitions. This venture of

the BJS was helped by the fact that the Congress was not as strong in the new areas as it was in the old areas. The BJS took up the question of the relative backwardness of the new areas and articulated it in the electoral sphere. It promised to the people of lower areas that if the BJS/BJP is voted to the power, the development of the lower areas will be taken care of. The relative backwardness of the area was attributed to the relative deprivation of the area. It was held that the old areas received the larger chunk of the state resources while the lower areas remained deprived and hence backward. The reason behind preferential treatment of the old Himachal Pradesh was said to be the continuous success of the Congress, which had its stronghold in the old Himachal Pradesh. Hence, we could see how the regional card was introduced in the electoral politics of the state. This strategy of the BJS/BJP paid off. The BJS/BJP gradually gained popularity in the lower areas and the lower areas came to be regarded as its stronghold. The old Himachal Pradesh, on the other hand, came to be seen as the stronghold of the Congress.

Thus, the electoral politics played a decisive role in the politicization of the sub-regional variations in the state. We have earlier maintained that the raw material of sub-regionalism-geographic, social and economic variations-already existed in the state. This raw material was processed through the process of electoral politics after 1966, and the result was the rise of sub-regionalism in the state.

III

1. The Two Phases of Sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh- Pre-1990 and Post 1990

The starting point of the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh is the 1966 merger. More than five decades have passed by since then. During this period, the sub-regional aspect in Himachal Pradesh did not remain same. It has experienced intensification as well as weakening in these 50 odd years. It has undergone two distinct phases. First phase

started in 1966 and lasted up to the historic apple agitation of July-August, 1990. The second phase started from 1990 onwards.

The first phase (1966-90) was the period of intensification of sub-regionalism. The process of intensification of the sub-regionalism was a gradual process which reached its zenith with the apple agitations of 1990 in which violence was also seen. The reasons of the strengthening of the sub-regionalism has already been discussed elsewhere in this study. The phase that started from 1990 onwards was the phase of de-intensification or weakening. The weakening of sub-regionalism was most obviously visible in the sphere of electoral politics where now the regional affiliation of the two political parties-the BJP and the Congress-increasingly became blurred. Various observers of Himachal Pradesh politics have also indicated towards the decreasing significance of sub-regionalism, especially in electoral sphere. The process of weakening was propelled by multiple factors that have been dealt in the next chapter. Here it is important to mention that though the phenomenon of sub-regionalism has weakened, but it has not altogether withered away. In short, the sub-regional feelings still exist but not in their aggressive avatar.

IV

1. The Uniqueness of Himachali Sub-regionalism

The decades of 1970s and 1980s hold a place of importance in Indian politics. This was the period when various identities, based on caste, religion, region, etc., came to enjoy an unprecedented influence on the state and national politics. This was the decade when the sub-regionalism dug its roots in the hills of Himachal Pradesh.

The start of 1990s saw India overhauling its economic policy with the introduction of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG). The LPG gave the private sector much greater space and influence that it ever enjoyed in India. The market was increasingly allowed to manage itself. Many observers upheld that this retreating of

the frontiers of the state and ever advancing frontiers of the market have created the inequality in the society. This has in turn contributed to the rise of regional feelings across the country. The observation has been buttressed by empirical evidences. Post 1990s, many regional identities like Telangana, Gorkhaland, Vidarbha, etc. have deepened.

But the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh, contrary to this trajectory of identity politics, has weakened since 1990s. Therein lies the uniqueness of the sub-regionalism of Himachal Pradesh that when regionalism and sub-regionalism has gone aggressive in the most of cases across India, sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh has carved out a unique trajectory of gradual weakening for itself. This uniqueness of the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh warrants a careful research.

CHAPTER 4

The Weakening of Sub-regionalism: An exploration of Causes

Abstract

The chapter is assembled in seven parts. The first part brings the existing views on the question of causes of weakening of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh. The second part exclusively investigates the political causes for the decline of sub-regionalism. This part suggests that two important factors-strong position of national parties and the weak position of state parties in the state; and emergence of a sort of divide between Hamirpur and Kangra-have contributed to the weakening of sub-regionalism. The third part maintains that increasing attainment of economic equality between the two sub-regions have assisted the process of declining sub-regionalism. The next part points towards the process of convergence of the social life of the people of both sub-regions and sees it as an assistive factor in the dilution of sub-regionalism. The fifth part establishes a relationship between the diffusion of important government institutions across the state with the process of weakening of sub-regionalism. The structural specifications of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh and its impact on the trajectory of sub-regionalism is the subject matter of the sixth part. The last part is an assortment of miscellaneous factors that shaped this trajectory of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh.

Introduction

The chapter takes up a vital question in relation to the *Himachali* sub-regionalism. It analyzes myriad factors responsible for the weakening of sub-regionalism in recent times in Himachal Pradesh. Answering this question is important for a couple of reasons. First, it is central for comprehending the unique trajectory of de-intensification of *Himachali* sub-regionalism when sub-regionalism in other parts of India followed an opposite trajectory of intensification.¹ Second, it would advance the existing general research on the same question pertaining to *Himachali* sub-regionalism by way of widening and deepening the analysis.

The analysis is streamlined under the following heads:

1. Politics and the weakening of sub-regionalism- This is discussed under two subheads (i) national political parties being stronger in the state instead of the state political parties, and (ii) rise of Hamirpur versus Kangra cleavage;
2. Economic factor and the weakening of sub-regionalism;
3. Social convergence and the weakening of sub-regionalism;
4. A Policy of State-institution Diffusion and the weakening of sub-regionalism;
5. Inherent structural constraints of sub-regions and weakening of sub-regionalism;
and
6. Miscellaneous factors.

I

1. What do the scholars say?

As far as this aspect is concerned, there is not much research to show. Yet, we can locate few general observations on the topic in a couple of articles published in last decade or so. For example, Chauhan and Ghosh in their 2007 write up contend that the

¹ Bright instances of this are the case of Telangana, Vidarbha, Darjeeling, Marathwada etc.

choice of voters for not casting their vote on the basis of regional and other such considerations is largely effectuated due to “a noticeable growth in literacy and awareness”.² The same writers in their 2004 article, while explaining the weakening of sub-regionalism, during the 2003 Assembly Elections and the 2004 General Elections in the state, suggest that it could be so because the voters are now “no longer emotional on this issue, but are more concerned with the larger issues of development”.³ Others attribute it to a careful alteration in the BJP's strategy of not floating the sub-regional card in the elections.⁴

Thematically speaking, the literature largely handles the question from the citizen perspective wherein any oscillation in any concerned phenomenon is explained from looking at the alteration in the nature, behavior, characteristics, fabric etc. of citizenry. The literature has not dealt the question from a holistic perspective wherein the matter is examined from all possible directions. Putting it differently, the project of comprehending intricate tapestry of the *Himachali* sub-regionalism has been subjected to a reductionist approach. One would also suggest that the literature is suffused with the modernist viewpoint on the issue in the sense that it seems to believe that the improvement in the level of education and literacy, enhancement in the volume of awareness etc. would automatically liquidate the influence of the identities like caste, religion, region etc.⁵

II

² Ramesh K Chauhan, and S. N. Ghosh. "Himachal Pradesh Elections 2007: A Post-Poll Analysis." *Economic and Political Weekly* 44, no. 6 (2009): 47.

³Ramesh K. Chauhan and S. N. Ghosh. "Bipolar Contest." *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, no. 51 (2004): 5506.

⁴ Prem R. Bhardwaj, "Himachal Pradesh Elections: An Analysis." *Economic and Political Weekly* 43, no. 2 (2008): 14.

⁵ The modernization theory was popular in the decades of 1950 and 1960 in India. Its subscribers held that as the modernization via modern education, modern political systems etc. will immerse the society; the identities like caste, religion, region etc. will lose their influence in the life of the people. In next few decades, it lost its ground as no such pattern could be consistently discerned over a long period of time.

1. Political Factors and the weakening of sub-regionalism

The political factors which have played a substantial part in this alteration in the trajectory of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh are numerous. We shall discuss two most important factors in this section. This set of factors includes:(a) national parties being stronger in the state than the regional or state parties; and (b) rise of Hamirpur and Kangra as rivals.

1.1 national parties being stronger in the state than the regional or state parties

We need to first develop functional definitions of state parties, regional parties and national parties before dealing this section. State parties here are the parties which have their presence only in one state. On the other hand, regional parties are the parties which are present in more than one state. These parties have more than a state and less than a national character. National parties are the parties which have a reasonable national presence and are declared by the Election Commission to be so.

As far as the sub-regions and political parties there in are concerned, we can imagine these following equations for a state having two sub-regions-

1. **Each sub-region being dominated by two different political parties:** This equation can have one of the following arithmetic of political parties: (i). Both areas being dominated by two separate state parties. (ii). Both sub-regions being dominated by two separate regional parties. (iii). Both sub-regions being dominated by two separate national parties. (iv). One region being dominated by a state party and the other being dominated by a national party. (v). one being dominated by a state party and the other being dominated by a regional party. (vi). One being dominated by a national party and the other being dominated by a regional party.
2. **Each sub-region being dominated by one party:** This can entail one of the following: (i). by a state party. (ii). By a national party. (iii). By a regional party.

Now, it is not difficult to see that which of the above equations is/are congenial to the continuation; and if possible, intensification of sub-regionalism. Three equations

enumerated in the second point are characterized by only one political party dominating the two sub-regions. This situation is not at all suited to existence of sub-regionalism, let alone thriving of it. Quite contrary, it can be a powerful factor in the flattening out of sub-regional differences.

Whereas equation (i) of point 1, that is, both sub-regions being dominated by two separate state political parties, to us, is the most congenial situation in which sub-regionalism not only can be sustained, but is highly likely to shoot upwardly in terms of intensification. We have two qualifiers for the second best position in this case. Equation (iv) and (v) of first point where one sub-region is dominated by a state party and the other sub-region is dominated either by a national political party or by a regional political party, are also positive for the sustainability of sub-regionalism. To extend the same line of argument, we can say that the least conducive equation is the (ii) equation in the second point wherein both sub-regions are dominated by a single national political party.

Moving forward, now we shall look into the position of state parties, regional parties and national parties in Himachal Pradesh in this order.

- (i) **State Political Parties in the State:** Himachal Pradesh has not witness the entrenchment of any strong state party. Though, many leaders at different point in time have launched numerous state parties, but they have not succeeded in their efforts in the proper sense of the term.⁶ In other words, there has been a general absence of strong state parties in the state. As a result, there was no question of both the sub-regions of the state being dominated by two different state parties. Thus, we can say that the most congenial situation for the thriving of sub-regionalism expressed via equation (i), point 1, was missing. The equation tells that two different state parties are in a position of strength in two different sub-regions. This situation, we argued earlier, is an ideal type for the sustenance and deepening of sub-regionalism. Absence of this situation means that sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh, other things

⁶ Him Loktantrik Morcha, Himachal Lokhit Party, Himachal Swabhimani Party, Himachal Vikas Party etc. were some of the parties floated by local leaders.

being equal, would not intensify. In other words, all other things being equal, this becomes a factor for the dilution of sub-regionalism, and this is exactly the way in which the sub-regionalism was impacted by this factor in the state.

- (ii) **Regional Political Parties in the state:** The story here is the same. Though the regional parties have contested assembly elections in the state, but their success has been negligible in terms of results. As was the case with state parties, formidable regional parties were generally absent in the state, and there was no reasonable probability of two regional political parties being dominant in the two sub-regions.
- (iii) **National Political Parties in the State:** The case with national parties is drastically different than the situation of state and regional parties. In fact, it has been only the national parties which have been ruling the state since its inception. From the decade of 1980s, the state has settled with a matured two party system.⁷ This bi-polarity of the party-system in this state is constituted by the BJP at one pole and the Congress being at the other. In other words, national parties have been strong in the state.

An attempt at understanding the interplay between the trajectory of sub-regionalism and the nature of this bi-polar party system in Himachal leads us to divide the interplay in two phases:

- a. **First phase: The phase of traditional strongholds⁸**- This phase is characterized by the two parties being strong in two different sub-regions, that is, the Congress being strong in the Upper Himachal and the BJS(later BJP) being same in the Lower Himachal.
- b. **Second Phase: The phase of penetration into each other's stronghold-** This phase is more recent. It is characterized by an increasing tendency of both parties being able to penetrate into each other's strongholds, that is, the BJP is being able

⁷ This observation is accessible in Sanjay Kumar, and Ramesh K. Chauhan. "Elections 2003: Understanding Complex Choices." *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 28 (2003): 2927-2932, Chauhan and Ghosh, 2004 and Bhardwaj, 2008.

⁸ For example, Bhardwaj(2008) refers about these traditional strongholds.

to enhance its influence in the Upper Himachal and the Congress being able to perform the same in Lower Himachal. This alteration was a result of structured efforts by the political parties. For example, as Sharma puts it

“In 1993, the Congress has followed a single point program. It has been trying to weaken the BJP strongholds in the new areas. It has initiated several measures to squarely meet the charge of discrimination. Special attention was paid to undertake development programmes in these areas. Farmers in the new areas have been persuaded to take to cultivation of fruit and vegetables. Attempts have also been made to project Dharamsala, which falls in the new area, as the winter capital of the state. Several government departments have been asked to open their zonal office there. Two new radio stations, one at Dharamsala and the other at Hamirpur, have been commissioned. In matters of opening and upgrading educational institutions the new areas are being given preference”.⁹

Similarly, the BJP has also extended its organizational footings in the upper reaches.

It does not imply that both the parties have lost their respective ground in their respective strongholds, it simply means that it is being penetrated by the other party.

We can see that where the first phase meant both the sub-regions being dominated by the two different national parties (equation (iii) of point 1), the second phase shows a dilution in this equation. The first phase, relatively speaking, was more pregnable to sub-regional tendencies than the second phase. It helps in understanding the recent dilution of the sub-regionalism in the state.

⁹ T. R. Sharma, "Local Configurations and National Parties in Himachal Pradesh." *Economic and Political Weekly* 34, no. 34/35 (1999): 2469.

Thus, we find that the downward trend in the intensity of the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh has been helped by the typical party system that the state has settled with.

1.2 The rise of a divide between Hamirpur and Kangra

The second political factor that we consider to be a worth noting one, and that has contributed to the weakening of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh is that of the divide between Hamirpur and Kangra. Putting it straight, our contention is this that rise of a divide between the districts of Hamirpur and Kangra have played a part in the dilution of sub-regionalism in the state. We need to look at it more closely to understand it in a better way. We will start with clarifying the type and nature of this divide. We will try to understand it by comparing its nature and scope with the larger divide of Upper and Lower in the state. We will, then, proceed to understand its implications for the sub-regionalism.

Hamirpur and Kangra are the part of the sub-region that we have been calling with the name of Lower Himachal. District Kangra was a part of Punjab which was merged with Himachal Pradesh in 1966.¹⁰ Hamirpur was the part of district Kangra till 1972 when it was carved out from Kangra as a separate district of the state.¹¹ As the present situation has it, Hamirpur constitutes only 2% of Himachal's area whereas Kangra is the district with highest number of people in the state.¹² River Beas forms the boundaries between these two districts.¹³

The justification given for the reorganization of districts in 1972 was that of administrative convenience as the district of Kangra was a cumbersome district in terms

¹⁰ Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966. This act, in addition to carving out a separate state of Haryana, merged the hilly Punjab region with Himachal Pradesh.

¹¹ Planning Department, Himachal Pradesh- <http://hpplanning.nic.in/hist-hp.htm>

¹² Census of Himachal Pradesh, 2011.

¹³ Jagdish Chand, "Changing Geography of Himachal Pradesh." *International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology* History 2, no. 11 (2013). <https://www.rioi.com/open-access/changing-geography-of-himachal-pradesh-.php?>

of geography and demography. But there was another stream of views which saw it as a Strategic step authored by the top leadership of state Congress in order to create a wedge between the people of Lower region. Voicing this point of view, for instance, Verma mentions in his work “to discourage the emergence of collective consciousness among the people of Kangra the district(Kangra) was divided into Kangra, Hamirpur and Una in 1972”.¹⁴

Coming back to our point, we would make it clear that here it should not be misconstrued that this carving out of Hamirpur from Kangra itself amounted to the creation of a divide between Hamirpur and Kangra that we are dealing with. The divide that we are concerned is more than a physical divide. It is a kind of political divide. The physical divide of course served as a starting point for the divide that we will now describe.

The divide between Hamirpur and Kangra signifies a situation where two districts are competing for the same opportunities of various nature, limited in number, which are assigned to the Lower Himachal. There are two outstanding feature of this divide. First, it is basically a competition for the fruits of development. Second, this divide is largely contiguous with the divide within the state BJP unit. This point warrants elaboration.

It is widely agreed that the Lower Himachal has been a stronghold of the BJP for a long period. The party’s two factions in the state also come from the two districts of this region- Hamirpur and Kangra. For a long time, the Kangra group was represented by Shanta Kumar and the Hamirpur group by P.K. Dhumal- both the leaders have been the CMs of the state in the past.¹⁵ The factions often found themselves at loggerheads with each other. Many times the high command had to interfere in order to defuse the tension between these two factions.¹⁶ Thus, the most remarkable feature of this divide is this that it corresponds with a political party’s internal-divide. It would not be an exaggeration if

¹⁴ Ramesh Kumar Verma, *Regionalism and Sub-regionalism in State Politics: Social, Economic and Political Bases*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1994, 188.

¹⁵ Shanta Kumar remained Chief Minister from 1977-80 and from 1990-92. P. K. Dhumal served as Chief Minister from 1998-2003 and from 2007-2012.

¹⁶ Visit this link for extracting a perfect instance of the type- <http://hillpost.in/2012/06/himachal-bjps-infighting-another-headache-for-gadhkari/45790/>

one holds, *ceteris paribus*, if the latter weakens, the former will follow the suit. Put differently, in present time, there is a positive co-relation between the Hamirpur-Kangra divide and the factionalism in the BJP. This feature of this divide also tells that the time this particular factionalism is weakened or demolished altogether, there is high probability that the Hamirpur-Kangra divide would also go down the same path. Let us now understand how has Hamirpur versus Kangra equation impacted the Upper versus Lower equation.

It (the divide between Hamirpur and Kangra) emerged as a factor in diluting the sub-regionalism in HP in multiple ways. First and the foremost, it served as an attention-diverter from the sub-regional debate for the people of the state, albeit occasionally. Second, as it was a sort of an extension of the BJP's party factionalism, it turned out to be a political opportunity for the Congress in more than one way. It provided Congress with an opportunity to extend its influence in the Lower region. Moreover, now the charges labeled by the BJP leaders and the people of the Lower region against the Congress for its discriminatory behavior towards the Lower region became less vocal. Thus, the rise of Hamirpur versus Kangra divide proved to be a factor which helped in making the sub-regionalism milder in the state.

III

1. Economic factor and the weakening of sub-regionalism

When we earlier analyzed the rise of sub-regionalism elsewhere in the study, we found that economic factor was a major element in the rise of the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh. In this section, we take a cue from that observation to contend that as the economic development in the state has geographically widened and dispersed, sub-regionalism has faded. This in fact is a straight forward formulation as it asserts that the cause itself has diluted; resulting in the alteration of the shape of the effect.

Let us first have a very brief insight into the economic aspect of sub-regionalism in order to set the things in perspective. Then, we will discuss a few instances of development. Moving forward, possible reasons would be analyzed behind this change. The section will in the end talk about its impact on sub-regionalism.

At the time of integration in 1966, there was a palpable difference in the stage of development in the Upper and Lower areas. The merged area was plainly undeveloped. In fact, the undeveloped state of merged area in the state of Punjab was one of the major reasons for its people's desire to merge with Himachal Pradesh. People of Lower Himachal had huge expectations from the state government at the time of merger but the state with its scarce resources could not match up to their expectations. With the passage of time, people of lower region started accusing the state government, which was then for the most part formed by the Congress, for discriminating against the Lower region. It was maintained that the distribution of the fruits of development was not equitable, and it was seen as the chief cause that rendered this area in a state of deprivation.

However, in the last two decades or so, the Lower parts of Himachal Pradesh have experienced noticeable development in multiple domains. Significant sectors to witness this rapid development in this region have been roads, electricity, educational institutions, medical institutions, administrative institutions, tourist points and many more. For example, now Hamirpur, which is a district of this sub-region, is having the densest road connectivity in the state. Himachal Pradesh Subordinate Service Board (HPSSB) was also established here in 1998. Many educational institutions of national repute have been established in the area. National Institute of Technology (NIT), Hamirpur; Central University of Himachal Pradesh (CUHP) are two of the illustrating instances of development in the area of education in this region. This area has also improved its status in medical sector. Rajender Prasad Medical College, Tanda and recently approved satellite medical college of the Post-Graduate of India (PGI), Chandigarh are two high quality medical institutions in this part of the state. Over the period, many tourist places of this area have also been upgraded to boost the tourist inflow. In addition to this, efforts have been taken to increase the income of farmers of this region by trying to introduce them to horticulture crops, primarily citrus fruits, which is climatically commercial in this

part. Tea plantation, which is done only in Kangra, has also received many incentives. Dharamsala sports ground, which now conducts international cricket fixtures, is the only facility of its kind in the state. To top all this, Dharamsala city was selected for the Smart City Project ahead of the state capital Shimla, which falls in the Upper Himachal.

An attempt at understanding the causes for initial snail-paced, and later rapid development of this area might be more interesting than a mere mention of the instances of development. Three interlinked set of reasons can be thought of in this regard. The purpose of the three points below is to understand two things -- initial slow and later rapid development of the Lower region.

- a. Administrative reasons;
 - b. Political reasons; and
 - c. Liberalization of economy.
- a. **Administrative reasons:** The Himachal Pradesh of pre-1966 was an extremely hilly terrain. A large part of area merged in 1966 had different geographical features from the already existing area of Himachal. It was less rugged and more plain. Thus, now Himachal had two topographically distinguishable areas--extremely hilly and semi-hilly. This topographical heterogeneity had far-fetching implications for the project of development in this state. Now, given this element of heterogeneity, it was neither possible nor desirable to formulate a homogenous roadmap for development for the entire state. Furthermore, perhaps, the planners of the state, who have been for years efficiently planning for an extremely hilly state, were not able to recognize the specificities of the merged area and could not formulate “different strategies for resource utilization”¹⁷ for the two different areas having different economic endowments,¹⁸ thus causing a fault in planning itself! This sensitivity to the specificities of merged area could only come with the passage of time. Thus, the argument is this that as the years passed by, the

¹⁷ T. R. Sharma, "Observations on Himachal Politics." *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (1987): 496.

¹⁸ The Upper region was extremely rich in Forest Wealth, hydroelectric capacity and tourism whereas the Lower region had vast opportunities in tourism, citrus fruits etc.

planners increasingly became sensitive and experienced to understand the specificities of the Lower region, enabling them to formulate better plans. This factor of experience, one could argue, also improved the execution of plans. Thus, it helped in achieving rapid development.

Another thing for this seemingly late development of this area might be the fact that the two areas were at a different stage of development in 1966. And, it was the Lower region which was lagging in the development.¹⁹ The catching-up by the Lower region thus understandably was a time consuming process. Thus, the assertion here goes like this- given the undeveloped stage of Lower region, the development inevitably was going to be a process with delayed fruits.

- b. **Political factors:** We can also attribute this brisk development to the changed political scenario in the state. Two notable changes in the politics of the state propelled this development. First, from about 1990s, the Congress started to extend its influence in the Lower region which was till then a bastion of the BJP. This was most famously done under the leadership of Virbhadra Singh. Most effective way of this extension of influence was to endeavour to match up to the development expectations of the people of the lower region. Second, it was from the same time period when the BJP started to come into power in the state more frequently. As is known, the BJP had its strong base in the Lower region itself; therefore, it should not be a matter of surprise that the development train in the region also started running at a swifter pace with its saddling in the power.
- c. **A unique interplay between the geography of the sub-region and the larger economic changes:** This fast development was also helped by the liberalization of economy which was meaningfully initiated in the year 1991. As a result of liberalization, the state ceded a large portion of its influence to the private players. We are here concerned with the influence in terms of the location of industry. The industries exercise this influence in conformity to the law of profit maximization.

¹⁹ Sharma, *Observations on*, 1987, 496. (The Indian Journal of Political Science, Vol. 48, No. 4, 1987). (Sharma state Sharma, "s "Since the new areas were on the 'periphery of Punjab in geographic as well as substantive sense they had not developed as much during 1947-66 as the old areas",) p. 496.

Our contention is this that the Lower region provided more attractive options to the industry than the Upper Himachal. These attractive options of the Lower region had these following features- (i) The region had better suitable terrain for the establishing and maintaining of industries as compared to the extremely rugged terrain of the Upper region. (ii). Location wise, this region bordered states like Punjab. It meant that availing of raw material from neighboring states was easier here. It also meant that the produce could easily be transported to the neighboring states for consumption, and (iii). Moreover, this area was more densely populated than the Upper region. Inter alia, it gave the industries a ready market for their produce.

Thus, we can see that there were many distinct attractions for the industry to set their units in this area instead of doing the same in the Upper area. It eventually resulted in the establishment of numerous industrial hubs in this region which in turn became an engine of development in this area.

Thus, we see that how the Lower region was developed at a rapid rate in recent decades despite its sluggish initial years. The dissatisfaction caused by a slow development was thus transformed into more and more acceptance precipitated by rapid development. This also ate into the divide of sub-regionalism. In fact, it was felt by scholars as early as in 1990s that the sub-regional feeling is there to be unless and until the Lower area completes the catch-up.²⁰ To sum up in one single phrase, this angle of *Himachali* sub-regionalism validates the phrase that cure emanates from the cause.

²⁰ Sharma, *Observations on*, 1987, 504.

IV

1. Socio-Cultural convergence and the weakening of sub-regionalism

This section analyses the de-intensification of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh from socio-cultural angle. The main question thus is to find out to what extent the socio-cultural structure of the state has contributed to the present state of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh. The topic requires us to spell some background to the discussion.

Himachal Pradesh, formed on 15th April 1948 and expanded in 1954 with the merger of the princely state of Bilaspur,²¹ was a small state. Economically, it was not considered viable. Coupling of these foregoing considerations kept its existence as a separate unit of the Union of India under constant jeopardy. In 1956 it had a narrow escape from being merged into the state of Punjab, thanks to the dissenting note of Fazal Ali, chairperson of the State Reorganization Commission.²² It kept struggling to ensure its continued separate existence for next fifteen years. For this, leaders of Himachal devised multiple methods. One of these efforts was their advocacy for the merger of the hilly regions of the state of Punjab with Himachal Pradesh. And, the argument to support this merger was the socio-cultural affinity argument. They maintained that the people living in the hills of Punjab showcased resounding socio-cultural closeness with the people of Himachal Pradesh. Therefore, the Punjab hills be merged with Himachal Pradesh. This claim was in fact not strictly reflective of the reality. The two regions did have many societal convergence points, but these points were accompanied by many societal divergence points. The differences lied in the dialects, rituals related with marriage, worship of the deities etc.²³ These differences were one of the many other

²¹ Prior to that, Bilaspur was a separate state of "c" category of Union of India. It was merged with Himachal Pradesh via The Himachal Pradesh and Bilaspur (New state) act, 1954.

²² Other two members of the commission -- H. N. Kunzru and K. Panikkar -- stood for Himachal's merger with the state of Punjab.

²³ Verma, *Regionalism and*, 1994. In his discussion on the social basis of sub regionalism in Himachal Pradesh, he states that though the dialects spoken in Himachal are clubbed under a uniform head of

reasons for the prevalence of prejudices between the people of these regions. It would be an exaggeration to hold that these societal uncommunalities were strong cause of sub-regionalism in the state. Still, it is reasonable to maintain that though the societal factor was not the defining factor in the rise of sub-regionalism, but one could reasonably regard it as a sustaining factor for the sub-regionalism. The loose difference between a defining factor and a sustaining factor is this that former is more prominent in the rise of the concerned event than the latter one. In other words, the former is a core factor in the coming of an event whereas the latter is a supporting one. Moreover, the former is more visible and clearer than the latter one.

Our argument here is this that as the sustaining factor of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh, that is, societal differences, is becoming increasingly even less substantial, the sub-regionalism is being also reciprocating the same trend.

There are many fields where societal convergence has increased. We want to add a disclaimer in the beginning that we are here neither concerned with the valuational judgment of good and bad in respect to these forecoming examples nor the factors propelling these changes. First, Polyandry was one of the many distinct features of the society of upper Himachal region. But, this tradition seems to have withered away in last few decades giving way to the widely prevalent system of marriage, i.e., monogamy. Thus, we witness a convergence on that front. Second, there is yet another aspect where the Upper hills seem to have socially emulated the Lower hills in recent times. There used to be a discernible variation in the way the Upper hill people and the Lower hill people used to perform their nuptials. The former used to be markedly less lavish than the latter in the wedding ceremonies. But, that seems to be blurring. to be exact, now the Upper hills have picked up this particular feature of the nuptials. As a flipside of this

Paharhi, but they significantly differ from each other. He uses Grierson's classification of Indian Languages to establish his assertion. Grierson kept Himachal Pradesh under the head of Western Paharhi Language, but, quite notably, he did not include the Kangra region under this category. The two regions are different in deity worships as the people of Lower region worship the famous Gods and Goddesses of Hinduism like Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesha, Jwala ji, Chintpurni, etc. On the other hand, people of Upper region primarily worship the local deities called Deota. Almost all villages have their own Deotas here. For further information on the institution of Deota, Surender Jodka, "Caste on the Hills: Divine power, social cohesion and hierarchy in Himachal Pradesh" (Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 50. No. 21, 2015) can be accessed.

aspect, dowry, which used to be chiefly missing in the nuptials of Upper region, now, seems to have found a grip in the Upper region as well. These are only representative examples, not the entire lot, which indicates this gradual societal convergence of the two sub-regions. Here it can be pointed out that the Lower region seems to be more imposing on the Upper region when it comes to the societal mating.

There is yet another interesting, and more complicated, thing at work. This concerns the peculiar way through which construction of the identity of *Paharhi* is affected. We can briefly look into its construction and try to analyze its implication for the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh. Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient literature to understand the nuances of this identity. We therefore can state some general observations about it.

There existed no apparent movement in the past which revolved round the identity of *Paharhi*. Neither was there any other effort to construct such identity. This identity of *Paharhi* seems to have more frequently used by the *non-Himachalis* to club all the *Himachalis* in a unit. This has served as an adjective employed to encompass all the people of this state. In other words, it lacked a sensitivity to the local differences of two sub-regions. Put differently, it tends to homogenize a not-so-homogeneous people. Thus, this identity is constructed more by the outsider than the insider itself. And, this is something that is not particularly resisted by the people at large.

The politics of this uniform identity has subtle ramifications for the sub-regionalism. As it defines Himachal Pradesh as a homogeneous unit; it is not compatible with the sub-regionalism which highlights the sub-regional specifications that are underlined by negation of uniformity. Thus, it runs antithetical to the project of sub-regionalism. And, a continued circulation of this vocabulary has contributed to the sidelining of the sub-regional angle.

Thus, we found out that the societal differences within Himachal Pradesh seem to be flattening out. Among other things, this became an effective reason in the straightening of the prejudices. That in turn helped to weaken the feeling of sub-regionalism in the state.

V

1. A Policy of State-institution diffusion and the weakening of sub-regionalism

An attempt at making a sense of the unique trajectory of the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh must also include an analysis of the state response vis-à-vis this sub-regional feeling. We will use the major administrative decisions taken by the state of Himachal Pradesh in last two decades in relation to the Lower sub-region as an indicator of the state's response to this sub-regionalism. We would stay with two such decisions and try to analyze their larger implications for the trajectory of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh.

These two decisions are: (a). establishing of the secretariat at Dharamshala in 2003; and (b). the decision of making the second capital of Himachal Pradesh at Dharamshala.

In 2003, the state government decided to make a secretariat at Dharamshala so that the people of the Lower region could find the administration at close proximity. It was an effective measure to check the hardship caused by a dreadful distance from Shimla of some parts of the Lower region.

Post-2003, many other decisions of such substance were arrived at. The decision taken in 2017 to make Dharamshala (a would-be 'smart city' at the foothills of McLeod Ganj, the seat of the Dalai Lama) the second capital of the state is an important decision among such decisions. Now, it is to be the 'winter capital of the state'.²⁴ This is a decision which deserves to be closely analyzed because the small size of the state of Himachal Pradesh does not help in understanding the coming up of the second capital. Accordingly, we briefly state two different, somewhat contradictory, views on both the foregoing decisions.

²⁴ <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/its-official-dharamshala-is-second-capital-of-himachal-pradesh-4551546/>

Both the decisions were attacked for being representative of the dual vice of economic imprudence and political motivation.²⁵ Notwithstanding these allegations, one would argue that the decisions were a part of the attempt of bringing the state nearer to the people.

We would abstain from discussing the economic and political criticisms of these moves as this does not fall under the jurisdiction of this section. We would rather point readers' attention to the relation of these moves to the sub-regionalism in the state.

These moves in a way diffused the embodiments of the state across the sub-regions. This proximity of the people of Lower sub-region to the state institutions helped in securing there deeper attachment to the state. It makes sense if one remembers that the crowding of all important institutions in the Upper region was one of the many causes that factored in the origin of the feeling of sub-regionalism in the people of Lower region. Thus, the spread of the same institutions across the state helped in curbing the same feeling. One would argue that the response of the state was in a way characterized by the aim to include by way of co-opting. The co-optive strategy of the state thus yielded the desired dividends by filling-up the gap between the state and the people.

There were many other steps which can be enumerated in this category like the establishment of the Himachal Pradesh Subordinate Service Selection Board (HPSSB) at Hamirpur, the shifting of the Himachal Pradesh Board of School of Education (HPBOSE) from Shimla to Dharamshala, etc. Thus, our argument is this that in response to the sub-regional feeling the state's response has been characterized by a policy of the institutional diffusion across the state. And, we contend that the de-intensification of the sub-regionalism in the state has been partly achieved by this policy.

²⁵ It is alleged that this move is to appease the franchise of 25 out of 68 assembly seats falling in the districts of Kangra, Hamirpur and Una in the context of the elections to be held in November, 2017. Economically, it is said that this would unnecessary put some extra burden on the state exchequer which is already suffocating under massive loans.

VI

1. Structural Aspect of the sub-regionalism and its weakening

One of the most important aspect in understanding this downing of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh is to comprehend the peculiar structure of *Himachali* sub-regionalism. In general terms, structure is something that holds a thing. It provides the shape to the thing concerned. Its properties decisively impact the appearance of the thing. In short, structure is largely responsible for what occurs to the thing based on it.

The structural properties of various phenomena are to great extent shaped by their contexts. Similarly, the *Himachali* sub-regionalism, due to its context, has its own specific structural properties. We contend that these structural specificities played a significant role in its weakening.

First and the foremost concerns its geographical and social formation. In geographical sphere, two things are important. First, the sub-regions though were topographically different, but they still were mountainous. The difference between their geographical textures is of degree, not of the kind. Thus, the geographical difference could not build a wall-like distinction between the two areas. Second, taken one at a time, the area of these sub-regions was not large enough to serve as a fuel for strong sub-regionalism. Seen from social lens, two points can be noted. First, the differences between the two sub-regions were milder in the sense that they were not binary or bright-lined. Second, the differences of the two regions from the people of the adjacent states of Punjab and Haryana were generally deeper than the differences that they had between themselves. Thus, we see how the base of the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh was geographically and socially so constituted that it could allow the sub-regionalism only under a certain intensity mark. Plus these constitutive features meant that the sub-regionalism is more likely to get smoother than rougher in terms of its nature.

There is yet another viewpoint which helps a bit to fathom the inherent limitedness of the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh. The sub-regionalism in

Himachal Pradesh was in a sense a result of the state reorganization as it was in the 1966 when the hilly areas of the state of Punjab under the policy of State Reorganization were merged with Himachal Pradesh. Thus, it was a result of a corrective measure of the Indian state. The project of the reorganization was a corrective step in the sense that it was aimed at achieving the best possible reorganization of the states from the angle of language, administration, culture etc. In this context, the merger of 1966 meant the merged areas and the merged with areas were theoretically best served by this merger. This necessitates some elucidation. Whereas For the Himachal Pradesh of pre-1966, The merger meant an assurance of continuance as a separate unit of Union of India, on the other hand, for the merged areas, it was a measure which united the people of the area with people of Himachal who had many, if not all, commonalities with them, instead of being attached with the people of Punjab or Haryana who were, in many respects, unlike them. One can, at the cost of being provocative, argue that the people of the merged area were offered a decision suffused with the lesser harm thesis. This peculiarity meant that the sub-regions though had some differences but their union was underlined by the recognition of the fact that their existence and interests are best assured through co-habitation under a uniform administrative unit of Himachal Pradesh. This recognition meant that the sub-regionalism in the state was not permissible beyond a limit. Quite contrary, it entailed that the sub-regionalism is allowed to fade away than to soar.

Yet another structural limitation to this sub-regionalism was this that it did not have its roots in any social movement or any other such event of historical weight. It always remained an economic and political sub-regionalism, that too of a qualified nature. Given this lack of rooting in any historically important happening, it never had the required wings to undertake a sustained flight.

In fact, an acknowledgment of the structural constraints of the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh goes a long way in understanding why it always functioned with a problem-solving approach within given administrative structures, rather than functioning with an alternative approach with an eye on the attainment of a separate state.

VII

1. Miscellaneous factors

The weakening of sub-regionalism in the state can also be understood by looking at the issues reigning during the assembly elections in the state. The issues have undergone a sort of paradigm shift in recent times. The issue to gain the most from this permutation is the issue of development. Though development as an issue has for decades been generally thickly present in the elections In Himachal Pradesh.²⁶ It has become even more dominating in recent decades.²⁷ This rise in focus on this issue implies two important things for our topic at hand- (a). the place of the sub-regional talk during elections has decreased, and (b). impact of development agenda on the sub-regional friction. The ideology of development is a homogenizing force for most frictions, particularly for the sub-regions. Thus, we can see how an alteration in the agenda of elections issues have influenced sub-regionalism in the state. It is important to mention here that we consider this popularization of the agenda of development both as an indicator and a cause of the decline of sub-regionalism in the state.

The ensuing point can be seen as a materialization of the first point. This deals with the rapid improvements in the means of transport and communication in the state. However obvious and clichéd it might sound, it is worth documenting that the better connectivity certainly help people in finding more common points and helped in better understanding on uncommon ones. In other words, the giant leaps taken by the state in the field of means and transport and communication have helped in thicker people-to-people contact which in turn has helped in dispelling many mutual prejudices which were

²⁶ Kumar and Chauhan, *Elections 2003*, 2003, 2930. Writers quote from a survey that the "development issues were the most important issue of election for nearly 31 per cent voters".

²⁷ Ashutosh Kumar, et al. *Rethinking State Politics in India: Regions within regions* (New Delhi, Routledge, 2011) 31. Here Amit Prakash in the introductory part of his contribution suggests that the "development — stresses uniformity and homogenisation".

one of the many causes of the sub-regionalism in the state. Thus, progress in this field can be considered a factor in the abatement of sub-regionalism.

One ventures to comment that the temporal distance from the merger of 1966 is an important factor in the thinning down of sub-regionalism. As the differences between the two areas were not severe, it was more probable that with the passage of time the sub-regional sentiment gets flattened out than to get increasingly crooked.

Summarizing

The foregoing analysis brings out some observations in relations to the recent dilution of *Himachali* sub-regionalism. First, it brings out the gaps in current research on the concerned question. Second, it extends its humble suggestions in filling the research gap. In this venture, we found out that the *Himachali* sub-regionalism, like all other socio-politico-economic phenomena, is an embedded phenomenon. Any genuine attempt to understand it should take note of this embeddedness. We also tried to practice our preaching by trying it to understand it from political, social, economic, state response, structural and other directions. We found that the cause for its dilution are manifold. Needless to say that the factors have inflicted varying degree of impact on this development of its trajectory. For example, political element is more influential than the social one. In short, in answer to the question as to what has caused the weakening of *Himachali* sub-regionalism, we can extend that many factors like political, economic, social, structural, state response, etc. have combined to generate the effect in the form of its weakening.

Chapter 5

Concluding Remarks

Himachal Pradesh has traversed a roller coaster ride of more than seven decades that was kicked off in the April month of 1948. Arguably 1966 merger was the most decisive juncture in this journey. This was an event that effected substantial alteration in Himachal Pradesh, almost in all walks of life. Insertion of the sub-regional aspect within the state was one of such alterations.

This study set for itself the task of investigating a part of this sub-regional aspect. The task has been completed in four segments, expressed in the form of four chapters, starting with a chapter on introduction. The next chapter started with the geographical sketch of the state and proceeded ahead discussing the history. The history of the state was studied in two portions-pre-colonial and colonial. Next segment unfolded the administrative history of the state from 1948 to 1971, when it finally acquired its present shape and status. An insight into the politics of the state has been provided in the next section. Major characteristics of the state politics in Himachal Pradesh like entrenchment of two-party system, bi-polar competition between the BJP and the Congress and presence of hardly any substantial state and regional party, stable governments, non-assertive presence of caste in politics, almost negligible presence of women in politics and influence of lobby trilogy in politics have been detailed. The section then arrived at the discussion of sub-regionalism in the state. The sub-regions of Himachal Pradesh were introduced. All of the three sub-regions are not the direct party to sub-regionalism. Hence, the sub-regions that directly feature in the equations of sub-regionalism were discussed under a different head. The points of convergence and divergence between the lower and upper Himachal Pradesh were elaborated besides the reasons for the exclusion of the trible-belt sub-region from the equations of sub-regionalism. The third chapter unfolded in four sections. First section brought out the manifestations of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh. The area of manifestations that have been discussed are political, electoral, economic and social. Linguistic constructs that are constructed and used by the

people of lower and upper area for each other were given a detailed treatment. The discussion then moved to the causes of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh. It has been argued that the merger of 1966 was the major event that over the time paved the way for the growth of sub-regionalism. The economic divergence between the two regions were also explained as a stimulus for the rise of sub-regional feelings. Historical perspective was also utilized for understanding the causes of sub-regionalism by referring to the differences between the lower and upper area that originated during, and due to the unshared colonial history of the two regions. Furthermore, an effort has been made to understand the rise of sub regionalism by an in-depth understanding of the electoral politics of the state in the post-merger period. The chapter then talked of the two distinct phases of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh-1966 to 1990 and then 1990 onwards. At the end, a short conversation has been provided about the uniqueness of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh, as compared to most of other cases in India.

The next chapter was devoted to a meticulous study of the factors that contributed to the weakening of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh in the period starting from the early parts of the decade of 1990. We began with a thematic assessment of the available explanations of this trajectory of sub-regionalism. We observed that the instances of attempts to address this aspect of sub-regionalism are not only almost negligible but also non-holistically structured. The chapter went ahead discussing the political aspect behind the process of weakening of sub-regionalism. Under the head of political factors, the strong position of two national political parties, i.e., the BJP and the Congress, and corresponding minuscule presence of state and regional parties, and the emergence of a new divide in the state between the districts of Hamirpur and Kangra were taken up. The discussion of the political factors was followed up by the discussion on the decreasing economic inequality in the state. We presented some concrete instances of increasing economic equality and then related it with the diluting sub-regional feelings. It has been argued that as economic divergence in the sense of economic development was a major cause for the rise of sub-regionalism in the state, its absence or watering-down would produce the effect of diluted sub-regionalism. The next section engaged with the social causes for the decline of sub-regionalism. It has been maintained that the two areas are also socially closer to each other compared to the level of 1966. This social divergence

was projected as one of the many reasons that has fueled the weakening of sub-regionalism. The chapter moved on to the discussion of state policies and their effects on sub-regionalism. The central point put forth here was that various kinds of state-run institutions have been opened up in the lower area, some of them have also been transferred from the upper area, and this has addressed one of the many grievances of the people of lower area. And hence contributed to the present weakening avatar of sub-regionalism. We then took up the structural analysis of the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh and observe that the sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh was structured in a way that it could not sustain a high intensity for a considerable time and was thus destined to decline. The next section, that took us to the end of the chapter, talked of some miscellaneous factors responsible for the weakening of sub-regionalism in the state.

The main research question of this study has been investigated in this (fourth) chapter. The question asks for the possible factors-processes, events, developments, etc.-that has influenced the decline of sub-regionalism. We made an attempt to answer this question from multiple directions. The political, economic and social aspects-the conventional directions to view the given questions-are sufficiently scrutinized for extracting some clues for comprehending this declining trajectory of the sub-regionalism. This is followed by two not-so-conventional but none the less extremely significant two points related to the weakening of sub-regionalism. First of which examines the process of gradual and planned scattering of the important government institutions in the lower area and its relation with the sub-regional feelings. The next point then unravels the structural specifications of the sub-regionalism and juxtaposes it with the weakening sub-regionalism. It is argued that the sub-regions and sub-regionalism in the state is so structured that it cannot go beyond a certain level of intensity and hence it is somewhat destined to decline. Thus, the first question is answered in the words that a host of factors-social, economic, political, structural specification and policies of the state-have collectively produced the effect of declining sub-regional feeling in the state.

The study has three other research questions. These questions, in their nature, are complementary to the main question. First of these has been dealt in the third chapter in general, and under in particular the heading of phaseography of sub-regionalism in the

state. We maintain that the texture of sub-regionalism was intense and abrupt in the first phase and it increasingly smoothed up after that. The third and fourth research question, on the other hand, have been dealt in the fourth chapter itself. The answer to the third question tells us that the state has certainly modified its policies over time to include more and more hitherto excluded areas in its fold. Moving forward, the structural specification, as we have also stated above, did play a substantial role in the weakening of sub-regionalism in the state. The study set out to explore the reasons for the decline of sub-regionalism and this is achieved through above questions and answers their of.

In regards to the field of research in social science, it is our sacred postulation that no work can utter the final word. By this we mean that no social science research can rightfully boast of having unearthed the ultimate, unsurpassable and unmatched truth. On the contrary, all works suffer from limitations. But some may have more limitations than the other. Applying this belief to this work, we would like to present some of the limitations that this work suffers from. First, this work is not based on field work. This makes the work prone to inaccurate observations and false projections. This becomes even more probable as the literature on the topic is not available in sufficient volume. Though we have endeavored to minimize such errors, but no theoretical carefulness is a sufficient substitute for a well-planned field work. Field work, it is our strong view, would have made the work more useful and qualitative. Second, the work is produced within the restrained confines of time and hence is a candidate for the errors of haste.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the work is a humble initiative to understand the nuances of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh. Its importance should not only be gauged from the stuff that it talks about, but also from the stuff that it does not talk about, that is, estimation of the value of this study should also take into account the research prospects that this study may open up. It can serve as an instigator for more advance and broad research on this topic and on the secondary topics that this work touches. It may provide a new approach for looking at Himachal Pradesh. For example, most of the social science research on Himachal Pradesh uncritically assume that Himachal Pradesh is an absolutely compact unit, and thus harmfully pushing under carpet the diversities of the land and people. We strive to correct this error. This study is an example of paying

sufficient attention to the cleavages and fault lines existent within Himachal Pradesh and subject them to systematic academic endeavors. The stereotypification of the people of lower and upper Himachal by each other, absence of state political parties and its impact on the sub-regional aspect, emergence of new cleavages in the state, the limitations of sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh, interplay between the identity of Pahari and sub-regionalism, etc. are some of the areas that this study touches upon and opens up for future research.

At the end, we maintain that sub-regionalism in Himachal Pradesh may continue to follow the same trajectory of decline. This is because the forces that precipitated its thinning down do not seem to be becoming absent or weak in the near future. Whether this feeling of sub-regional affiliation will altogether banish in the years to come, is a question too sensitive to comment upon without sincere research.

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