

**LEGISLATORS IN INDIA:  
A COMPARISON OF MLAs IN FIVE STATES**

**Virinder Kumar Chopra**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D**

**Department of Government  
London School of Economics & Political Science  
University of London**

**December 1993**

UMI Number: U554619

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI U554619

Published by ProQuest LLC 2014. Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against  
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346



THESES

F

7091

X210286201

## **ABSTRACT**

This study, encompassing five of India's twenty-five states with 42.4% of its population, is the first comparative evaluation of India's state-level legislators (MLAs). So far research on MLAs has resulted in a series of studies in individual states largely focused on their changing socio-economic background and political socialization. The present enquiry extends this to examine their activities, effectiveness, role perceptions, and attitudes particularly in relation to national issues.

The selected states were chosen to represent the diversity of India along regional, ethnic and linguistic lines and also to represent five different political parties in India which display different sub-cultures and ideologies: Uttar Pradesh - Hindi heartland, India's most populous state (population 139 million, 1991, ruling party BJP, 1991/2); Maharashtra - Western region, India's commercial capital (79 million, Cong.I); West Bengal - Eastern region, a longstanding and flourishing leftist government (68 million, CPI(M) led Left-front); Tamilnadu - Southern region, ruled by regional parties since 1967 (56 million, DMK); and Haryana - Northern region, a prosperous agricultural state (16 million: Janata Dal, 1990). The research is based upon face to face interviews of at least an hour's length with MLAs in these five states. The data reported are largely quantitative but rest upon qualitative and inter-active contents.

The findings are three fold: first, provincial legislators, whether in Hindi heartland or elsewhere, have a commitment to the concept and unity of India; second, in the light of the secondary literature on legislative roles, MLAs in India are on balance closer to the "errand-boy" model than to the Westminster model of legislators holding, at least theoretically, the executive to account; third, there are significant variations in terms of socio-economic backgrounds and the perceptions of various state level and national issues between different states and different parties.

MLAs, irrespective of their state or party and by virtue of their strategic position in the middle strata between the apex and base of society, are a vital and sensitive link in the process of political integration in India. These intermediate elites are largely "politically bilingual" with a capability to relate to both the elite above and the "masses" below. This makes them not only effective channels of communication but also an influential mediating linkage between the two. India's current population is over 850 million and this populous democracy is ultimately articulated by 545 MPs at national level. But the author argues that some 4000 provincial legislators, as an important component of India's intermediate elite, are crucial to the stability of India.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                      |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Abstract</i>                                                      | 2   |
| <i>Maps and Tables</i>                                               | 6   |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>                                              | 12  |
| <i>Abbreviations</i>                                                 | 13  |
| <b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>                                               | 15  |
| The Thesis                                                           | 18  |
| Background                                                           | 23  |
| An Overview                                                          | 27  |
| Institutional Decline                                                | 33  |
| Centre → Periphery                                                   | 36  |
| Periphery → Centre                                                   | 39  |
| The Structure of the Thesis                                          | 43  |
| <b>II. INDIA'S PROVINCIAL LEGISLATORS: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE</b> | 45  |
| A Brief Perspective on Legislatures                                  | 45  |
| Categories of Legislatures                                           | 47  |
| Functions of Legislatures                                            | 51  |
| Legislators                                                          | 54  |
| Representation in Developing Countries                               | 63  |
| The Indian MLAs                                                      | 68  |
| Review of the literature                                             | 70  |
| <b>III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF MLAs</b>                        | 79  |
| Introduction                                                         | 79  |
| Residence                                                            | 81  |
| -Party-wise                                                          | 86  |
| Occupation                                                           | 88  |
| -Party-wise                                                          | 92  |
| Education                                                            | 95  |
| -Party-wise                                                          | 102 |
| <b>IV. POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BACKGROUND</b>                        | 106 |
| Motivation to join Politics                                          | 106 |
| -Party-wise                                                          | 112 |
| Background of Political Activity                                     | 115 |
| -Party-wise                                                          | 119 |
| Changing Political Affiliations                                      | 122 |
| -Party-wise                                                          | 124 |
| <b>V. CONSTITUENCY ISSUES</b>                                        | 126 |
| MLAs and their Constituents                                          | 126 |
| -Party-wise                                                          | 135 |
| Type of requests by the visitors -Party-wise                         | 138 |
| Organisation in Constituencies                                       | 139 |
| -Party-wise                                                          | 141 |
| <b>VI. ASSEMBLY ACTIVITY</b>                                         | 143 |
| Value of Speaking in the Assembly                                    | 146 |
| -Party-wise                                                          | 150 |
| Perceived value in the work of Legislative Committees                | 153 |
| -Party-wise                                                          | 158 |

|                                                         |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Answers to questions in Assembly                        | 160 |
| -Party-wise                                             | 166 |
| Combined Index of Assembly Activity                     | 169 |
| -Party-wise                                             | 170 |
| Perceived participation in Assembly debates             | 171 |
| -Party-wise                                             | 174 |
| <b>VII. ROLE PERCEPTION OF MLAs</b>                     | 178 |
| MLA as a Representative                                 | 179 |
| -Party-wise                                             | 182 |
| Main Role-behaviour of MLAs                             | 183 |
| -Party-wise                                             | 188 |
| <b>VIII. SOCIAL STATUS OF MLAs</b>                      | 198 |
| MLAs' perception of their Social Status                 | 199 |
| -Party-wise                                             | 201 |
| State Assembly or National Parliament                   | 203 |
| -Party-wise                                             | 207 |
| <b>IX. GENERAL</b>                                      | 211 |
| Sources of Finance for Election Campaign                | 211 |
| -Party-wise                                             | 216 |
| MLAs' Travel Experience                                 | 219 |
| -Party-wise                                             | 220 |
| Nature of Media read by MLAs                            | 220 |
| -Party-wise                                             | 222 |
| <b>X. PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE IN STATE ASSEMBLIES</b> | 224 |
| Committees in Legislatures                              | 225 |
| Classification of Committees                            | 226 |
| Purposes of Committees                                  | 227 |
| Committees in India                                     | 231 |
| Public Accounts Committee in State Legislatures         | 232 |
| <b>ANNEXURE X.A.1 TO CHAPTER X</b>                      | 241 |
| Haryana Public Accounts Committee                       | 241 |
| Case studies from the reports of PAC in Haryana         |     |
| Case I                                                  | 242 |
| Case II                                                 | 244 |
| Maharashtra Public Accounts Committee                   | 245 |
| Case studies from the reports of PAC Maharashtra        |     |
| Case I                                                  | 245 |
| Case II                                                 | 248 |
| Case III                                                | 249 |
| Tamilnadu Public Accounts Committee                     | 250 |
| Case studies from the reports of PAC Tamilnadu          |     |
| Case I                                                  | 251 |
| Case II                                                 | 252 |
| Case III                                                | 252 |

|                                                    |         |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------|
| West Bengal Public Accounts Committee              | 253     |
| Case studies from the reports of PAC West Bengal   |         |
| Case I                                             | 254     |
| Case II                                            | 256     |
| Case III                                           | 256     |
| Case IV                                            | 257     |
| Uttar Pradesh Public Accounts Committee            | 258     |
| Case studies from the reports of PAC Uttar Pradesh |         |
| Case I                                             | 260     |
| Case II                                            | 261     |
| <br><b>PART TWO: VIEWS ON NATIONAL ISSUES</b>      | <br>263 |
| <b>XI. INDIA'S MOST CRITICAL PROBLEMS</b>          | 266     |
| India's Most Critical Problems -Party-wise         | 276     |
| <b>XII. VIEWS ON OVER-POPULATION AND POVERTY</b>   | 285     |
| Perception of Over-population                      | 287     |
| -Party-wise                                        | 293     |
| Reasons for persistence of Poverty                 | 298     |
| -Party-wise                                        | 301     |
| <b>XIII. PERCEPTION OF CORRUPTION IN POLITICS</b>  | 310     |
| Views on Corruption -Party-wise                    | 317     |
| <b>XIV. VIEWS ON CASTE BASED RESERVATIONS:</b>     | 322     |
| Views on Caste-based Reservations -Party-wise      | 331     |
| <b>XV. VIEWS ON PANCHAYATI RAJ</b>                 | 337     |
| Views on Panchayati Raj -Party-wise                | 346     |
| <b>XVI. VIEWS ON CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS</b>        | 351     |
| Views on Centre-state Relations -Party-wise        | 357     |
| <b>XVII. VIEWS ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION</b>         | 359     |
| Role of religion in national integration           | 360     |
| -Party-wise                                        | 363     |
| Role of language in national integration           | 364     |
| -Party-wise                                        | 368     |
| Role of politics in national integration           | 370     |
| -Party-wise                                        | 374     |
| <b>XVIII. CONCLUSION</b>                           | 377     |
| Summary                                            | 378     |
| Final Inferences                                   | 387     |
| <b>APPENDIX 1</b>                                  | 393     |
| Questionnaire                                      | 393     |
| <b>APPENDIX 2</b>                                  | 400     |
| Public Accounts Committee, Rules of procedure      | 401     |
| <b>SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>                         | 409     |

## MAPS

|               |                                  |           |
|---------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Map 1:</b> | <b>Map of India: Five States</b> | <b>14</b> |
|---------------|----------------------------------|-----------|

## TABLES

|                    |                                                                                                  |     |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Table III.1</b> | State-wise strength of different Political parties (1990-91)                                     | 81  |
| <b>Table III.2</b> | Residential Background of MLAs in Sampled States (1990-92)                                       | 82  |
| <b>Table III.3</b> | Residential background of MLAs (Party-wise)                                                      | 86  |
| <b>Table III.4</b> | Main Occupations of MLAs                                                                         | 88  |
| <b>Table III.5</b> | Main Occupations of MLAs (Party-wise)                                                            | 93  |
| <b>Table III.6</b> | Educational Background of MLAs                                                                   | 99  |
| <b>Table III.7</b> | Educational Background of MLAs (Party-wise)                                                      | 103 |
| <b>Table IV.1</b>  | Motivation to Join Politics                                                                      | 108 |
| <b>Table IV.2</b>  | Motivation to Join Politics (Party-wise)                                                         | 113 |
| <b>Table IV.3</b>  | Political Background of MLAs                                                                     | 116 |
| <b>Table IV.4</b>  | Political background of MLAs (Party-wise)                                                        | 119 |
| <b>Table IV.5</b>  | Number of MLAs who changed Party Affiliation one or more times during their career               | 123 |
| <b>Table IV.6</b>  | Number of MLAs who changed Party Affiliation once or more times during their career (Party-wise) | 124 |
| <b>Table V.1</b>   | Estimated average daily visitors while in Constituency                                           | 128 |
| <b>Table V.2</b>   | Type of Requests made by the Constituents                                                        | 129 |
| <b>Table V.3</b>   | Estimated average daily visitors while in Constituency (Residence-wise)                          | 134 |
| <b>Table V.4</b>   | Estimated average daily visitors while in Constituency (Party-wise)                              | 135 |
| <b>Table V.5</b>   | Index of Visitors (Party-wise)                                                                   | 137 |
| <b>Table V.6</b>   | Residence-wise Index of Visitors                                                                 | 138 |

|             |                                                                                                              |     |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table V.7   | Type of requests made by the Constituents (Party-wise)                                                       | 138 |
| Table V.8   | Organisation in Constituencies                                                                               | 139 |
| Table V.9   | Organisation in Constituencies (Party-wise)                                                                  | 141 |
| Table V.10  | Organisation in Constituencies (Party-wise excluding Maharashtra)                                            | 142 |
| Table VI.1  | Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity<br>(Speaking in Assembly)                                                 | 146 |
| Table VI.2  | Index of the Value of Speaking<br>in the Assembly                                                            | 150 |
| Table VI.3  | Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity<br>(Speaking in the Assembly: Party-wise)                                 | 151 |
| Table VI.4  | Index of the Value of Speaking in the Assembly (Party-wise)                                                  | 153 |
| Table VI.5  | Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity<br>(Work of Legislative Committees)                                       | 154 |
| Table VI.6  | Index of perceived value of Legislative Committees                                                           | 157 |
| Table VI.7  | Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity<br>(Work of Legislative Committees: Party-wise)                           | 158 |
| Table VI.8  | Index of the perceived value of<br>Legislative Committees (Party-wise)                                       | 160 |
| Table VI.9  | Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity<br>(Answers to Questions in Assembly)                                     | 161 |
| Table VI.10 | Index of response whether the<br>answers to questions in assembly<br>are generally satisfactory              | 166 |
| Table VI.11 | Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity<br>(Answers to Questions in Assembly: Party-wise)                         | 166 |
| Table VI.12 | Index of response whether the<br>answers to questions in assembly<br>are generally satisfactory (Party-wise) | 169 |
| Table VI.13 | Indices on Assembly Activity                                                                                 | 170 |
| Table VI.14 | Ranking of the parties<br>based on the indices of<br>response on Assembly Activity                           | 171 |
| Table VI.15 | Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity<br>(Debates in the Assembly)                                              | 171 |
| Table VI.16 | Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity<br>(Debates in the Assembly: Party-wise)                                  | 175 |

|              |                                                                                                                |     |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table VII.1  | Role Perception of MLAs<br>Whom do you represent?                                                              | 180 |
| Table VII.2  | Role Perception of MLAs<br>Whom do you represent (Party-wise)                                                  | 182 |
| Table VII.3  | Role Perception of MLAs<br>What Role do you Mainly Perform?                                                    | 184 |
| Table VII.4  | Role Perception of MLAs<br>What Role do you mainly perform (Party-wise)                                        | 188 |
| Table VII.5  | Views of MLAs on their being Effective in their job                                                            | 191 |
| Table VII.6  | Are Ruling Party MLAs more Effective than Opposition?                                                          | 191 |
| Table VII.7  | Views of MLAs on their<br>being Effective in their job (Party-wise)                                            | 195 |
| Table VII.8  | Are Ruling Party MLAs More<br>Effective than Opposition? (Party-wise)                                          | 196 |
| Table VIII.1 | MLAs' Perception of<br>their Own Social Status                                                                 | 200 |
| Table VIII.2 | MLAs' perception of their own Social Status (Party-wise)                                                       | 202 |
| Table VIII.3 | Given a choice would most MLAs contest<br>the Lok-Sabha or the State Assembly                                  | 204 |
| Table VIII.4 | When asked whether the status of<br>an MP was higher than that of an MLA                                       | 204 |
| Table VIII.5 | Given a choice would most<br>MLAs contest election for the<br>Lok-Sabha or for the State Assembly (Party-wise) | 207 |
| Table VIII.6 | When asked whether the status of<br>an MP was higher than that of an MLA                                       | 207 |
| Table IX.1   | Sources of Finance for Election Campaign                                                                       | 213 |
| Table IX.2   | MLAs describe the following as their<br>Sources of Finance for their Election Campaign (Party-wise)            | 217 |
| Table IX.3   | MLAs' Travel Experience in India                                                                               | 219 |
| Table IX.4   | MLAs' Travel Experience in India (Party-wise)                                                                  | 220 |
| Table IX.5   | Nature of Newspapers/Journals read by MLAs                                                                     | 221 |
| Table IX.6   | Nature of newspapers/journals read by MLAs (Party-wise)                                                        | 222 |
| Table X.1    | Reports of West Bengal Public Accounts Committees                                                              | 235 |

|             |                                                                                                           |     |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table X.A.1 | Reports of Haryana Public Accounts Committee                                                              | 242 |
| Table X.A.2 | Data regarding Homes constructed and Allotted to Landless Scheduled Castes and other Backward Communities | 243 |
| Table X.A.3 | Reports of Maharashtra Public Accounts Committee                                                          | 245 |
| Table X.A.4 | Reports of TamilNadu Public Accounts Committee                                                            | 250 |
| Table X.A.5 | Reports of Uttar Pradesh Public Accounts Committee                                                        | 259 |
| Table XI.1  | What MLAs Perceive to be India's Most Critical Problems                                                   | 267 |
| Table XI.2  | Views of Haryana MLAs compared to aggregated views of all MLAs from the other four states                 | 268 |
| Table XI.3  | Views of Maharashtra MLAs compared to aggregated views of all MLAs from the other four states             | 269 |
| Table XI.4  | Views of Tamilnadu MLAs compared to aggregated views of all MLAs from the other four states.              | 270 |
| Table XI.5  | Views of West Bengal MLAs compared to aggregated views of all MLAs from the other four states             | 271 |
| Table XI.6  | Views of Uttar Pradesh MLAs compared to aggregated views of all MLAs from the other four states           | 274 |
| Table XI.7  | Five Most Critical Problems of India (Variance in Response)                                               | 275 |
| Table XI.8  | What MLAs perceive to be India's Most Critical Problems (Party-wise)                                      | 277 |
| Table XI.9  | Views of Cong.I MLAs compared to aggregated views of all MLAs from the other four parties                 | 278 |
| Table XI.10 | Views of CPI(M) MLAs compared to aggregated views of all MLAs from the other four parties                 | 279 |
| Table XI.11 | Views of BJP MLAs compared to aggregated views of all MLAs from the other four parties                    | 281 |
| Table XI.12 | Views of DMK MLAs compared to aggregated views of all MLAs from the other four parties                    | 282 |
| Table XI.13 | Views of Janata Dal MLAs compared to aggregated views of all MLAs from the other four parties             | 283 |
| Table XI.14 | Views of MLAs from the five parties aggregated to show five most identified problems                      | 284 |
| Table XII.1 | Views on Over-population                                                                                  | 287 |
| Table XII.2 | Views on Types of Measures required for Effective Family Planning                                         | 289 |

|              |                                                                                                                  |     |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table XII.3  | Specific highest emphasis of the five States                                                                     | 293 |
| Table XII.4  | Views of MLAs on the Population problem (Party-wise)                                                             | 293 |
| Table XII.5  | Views on Type of Measures required for Effective Family Planning (Party-wise)                                    | 295 |
| Table XII.6  | Specific highest emphasis of the five political parties                                                          | 297 |
| Table XII.7  | Specific lowest emphasis of the five political parties                                                           | 297 |
| Table XII.8  | Main Reason for persistence of Poverty in India                                                                  | 300 |
| Table XII.9  | What is the main reason for the persistence of poverty in India (Party-wise)                                     | 301 |
| Table XII.10 | Suggested Sectors for combating Poverty and Under-development                                                    | 303 |
| Table XII.11 | Highest and Lowest support for suggested sectors in combating poverty and underdevelopment                       | 306 |
| Table XII.12 | Suggested sectors for combating Poverty and Under-Development (Party-wise)                                       | 307 |
| Table XII.13 | Highest and Lowest support for suggested sectors in combating poverty and underdevelopment (Party-wise)          | 309 |
| Table XIII.1 | Views on Corruption                                                                                              | 313 |
| Table XIII.2 | (Views on Corruption...contd.)<br>Who is mainly responsible                                                      | 313 |
| Table XIII.3 | Views on Corruption (Party-wise)                                                                                 | 318 |
| Table XIII.4 | (Views on Corruption...contd.)<br>Who is Mainly Responsible (Party-wise)                                         | 318 |
| Table XIV.1  | Views of MLAs on Caste based Reservations (Mandal Commission)                                                    | 325 |
| Table XIV.2  | Views of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe MLAs on Caste-based Reservations (Mandal Commission)                    | 331 |
| Table XIV.3  | Views of MLAs on Caste-based Reservations (Mandal Commission: Party-wise)                                        | 332 |
| Table XIV.4  | Views of <i>Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe</i> MLAs on Caste-based Reservations (Mandal Commission: Party-wise) | 335 |
| Table XV.1   | Views of MLAs on Panchayati Raj                                                                                  | 339 |
| Table XV.2   | Views on Panchayati Raj (MLAs with Rural Background)                                                             | 343 |



|              |                                                                                     |     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table XV.3   | Views on Panchayat Raj<br>(MLAs with background of Panchayat Position)              | 345 |
| Table XV.4   | Views of MLAs on Panchayati Raj (Party-wise)                                        | 346 |
| Table XV.5   | Views of MLAs with Rural<br>background on Panchayati Raj (Party-wise)               | 348 |
| Table XVI.1  | Views of MLAs on Centre-state Relations                                             | 353 |
| Table XVI.2  | Knowledge of MLAs about Sarkaria Commission's Report                                | 356 |
| Table XVI.3  | Views of MLAs regarding Centre-state Relations (Party-wise)                         | 357 |
| Table XVI.4  | Knowledge of Sarkaria Commission Report (Party-wise)                                | 358 |
| Table XVII.1 | Views on National Integration: Role of Religion                                     | 361 |
| Table XVII.2 | Views on National Integration: Role of Religion (Party-wise)                        | 363 |
| Table XVII.3 | Views on National Integration: Role of Language                                     | 366 |
| Table XVII.4 | Views on National Integration: Role of Language (Party-wise)                        | 369 |
| Table XVII.5 | Views on National Integration: Role of Politics                                     | 372 |
| Table XVII.6 | Indices of Response on National Integration<br>by MLAs from the five states         | 373 |
| Table XVII.7 | Views on National Integration: Role of Politics (Party-wise)                        | 374 |
| Table XVII.8 | Indices of Response on National Integration<br>MLAs from the five political parties | 376 |

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If not for all the MLAs in various states who patiently listened to all my questions and provided candid responses, this thesis would not have been possible. Many of them went out of their way to provide information and assistance. My first thanks are to them.

My thanks are also due to Ashis Bannerjee who helped in clarifying the initial concept and structure of the study, D S Sheth whose advice was invaluable, and David Taylor who, despite an unreasonable time frame, commented on the first draft of the questionnaire while on holiday.

Several staff members of various legislative assemblies provided particular help: M/s Thorat and Chavan, Maharashtra; Ravindran, Asokan and Mrs Muneera, Tamilnadu; and, Amita Rajan, Uttar Pradesh.

The early writing phase was greatly eased by my brother Ravi's hospitality, Amrit's help with computers, George's hard work in reformatting tables, Freddie's ready assistance, and unending help from Mustafa & Jawad. In every state we received assistance from friends and I gratefully acknowledge the hospitality of Rajiv Gujral, Choudhary Hari Singh and family, Shahid Baqui and family, and the Tandon.

Among scholarly friends Ranbir Singh displayed astonishing energy in racing around the state of Haryana in pursuit of our MLAs. Ashutosh Varshney clarified many issues in several stimulating conversations. Sunil Shastry went out of his way to provide assistance. Judy's copy editing well within the tight deadline was not only indispensable, it was a miracle.

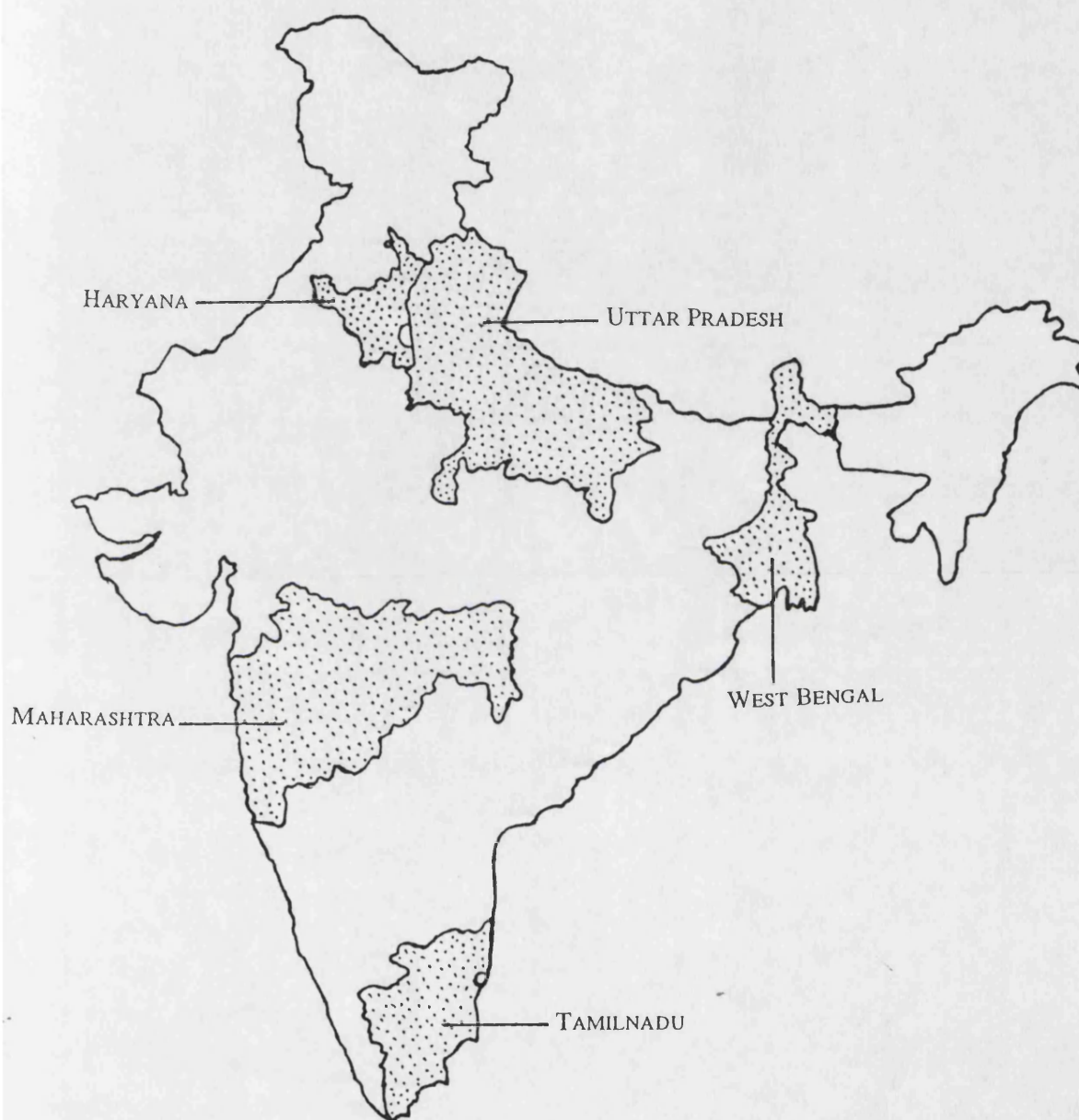
My biggest debt is to my supervisor Tom Nossiter. His charming but uncompromising supervision has caused this thesis to be a great deal more interesting than I thought possible in the early stages. His constant attention, help and encouragement when all seemed lost, have made this thesis possible. I can never thank him enough. My thanks to Jean too for being so patient and hospitable.

At a personal level, my thanks to my wife Meena who persevered through the difficult times of travelling the length of India, the long waits in dusty corridors and the frequently arduous living conditions. Her translations in Maharashtra and West Bengal were most useful. The laborious fieldwork was fun because we were together. I have the greatest appreciation for the love and support of all my family particularly my sister Shailja and brother Vinod who helped get over some really dark moments. I could not have done it without them.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

|                  |                                             |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>AIADMK:</b>   | <b>All India Dravida Munnetra Kazagham</b>  |
| <b>BJP:</b>      | <b>Bharatiya Janata Party</b>               |
| <b>BKD:</b>      | <b>Bharatiya Kranti Dal</b>                 |
| <b>CPI(M):</b>   | <b>Communist Party of India (Marxist)</b>   |
| <b>C&amp;AG:</b> | <b>Comptroller and Auditor General</b>      |
| <b>DMK:</b>      | <b>Dravida Munnetra Kazagham</b>            |
| <b>MLA:</b>      | <b>Member of State Legislative Assembly</b> |
| <b>NSS:</b>      | <b>National Statistical Survey</b>          |
| <b>PR:</b>       | <b>Panchayati Raj</b>                       |
| <b>PAC:</b>      | <b>Public Accounts Committee</b>            |
| <b>RSS:</b>      | <b>Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh</b>          |
| <b>SC:</b>       | <b>Scheduled Caste</b>                      |
| <b>ST:</b>       | <b>Scheduled Tribe</b>                      |
| <b>UP:</b>       | <b>Uttar Pradesh</b>                        |

Map 1: MAP OF INDIA: FIVE STATES



| State         | Area<br>(000 km <sup>2</sup> ) | % of<br>India | Population<br>(millions) | % of<br>India |
|---------------|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Uttar Pradesh | 294                            | 8.94%         | 139.03                   | 16.47%        |
| Maharashtra   | 307                            | 9.34%         | 78.75                    | 9.33%         |
| West Bengal   | 88                             | 2.68%         | 67.98                    | 8.05%         |
| Tamilnadu     | 130                            | 3.95%         | 55.64                    | 6.59%         |
| Haryana       | 44                             | 1.34%         | 16.31                    | 1.93%         |
| INDIA         | 3287                           | 100%          | 844.32                   | 100%          |

Source: Census of India 1991 (Provisional figures)

# I. INTRODUCTION

In the study of democratic political systems, it has long been recognised that while strong institutions are essential for political development and stability, the role of political culture and political actors, who relate to and perform within the institutional framework of a polity, is equally important.<sup>1</sup> Wahlke rightly argues that one without the other provides only a partial explanation of political processes within a system and that the institutional and the behavioural are interdependent.<sup>2</sup> In the Indian context, where leadership, both national and regional, has often played a deinstitutionalizing role, the behavioural assumes greater importance.<sup>3</sup>

Viewed thus, elected Members of State Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) in India are important political actors by virtue of their strategic position in the political organization of a state. Not only does the executive, who at state level control an extensive patronage network, come mostly from their ranks but, as key players, they can also influence over time the development of political culture at state level.

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, W H Morris-Jones, *The Government and Politics of India*, Third (revised) Edition, (Huntington: The Eothen Press, 1987) ch. 2; see also Samuel P Huntington, 'Change to Change: Modernization, Development and Politics' in *Comparative Politics*, April 1971, pp 283-322. Huntington argues that a political system is an aggregate of components which include *political culture*, political structures, groups, *leadership* and policies. Changes in political development and stability are consequent upon any changes in these major components and in the relations between change in one component and change in another. p.316 (emphasis mine)

<sup>2</sup> John C Wahlke, Heinz Eulau, William Buchanan, and LeRoy Ferguson, *The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior* (New York: John Wiley, 1962) ch. 1

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1991) Ch. 13; Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987) pp 83-87

Despite their importance, MLAs are a poorly researched species. There are several studies of MLAs but all of single states and, in many cases, limited to specific groups in the legislature.<sup>4</sup> No attempt seems to have been made to analyse the MLAs as second tier political elites in India. This is puzzling when we take into account the fact that in addition to the 543 elected MPs at national level,<sup>5</sup> only some 4000 Indian MLAs represent about 500 million voters.<sup>6</sup>

The twin objectives of this thesis are to describe the 'Indian' MLA and to examine, through a detailed empirical analysis, variations in perceptions and orientations of MLAs from five different states and five different political parties in India.

We identify MLAs as not only important political actors who exert varying degrees of influence on state level politics and policies, but also as significant agents in the process of political integration or disintegration which is often considered a central problem for all developing societies. A crucial aspect of political integration is the perceived 'gap' between the elite and the mass representing "differences in outlook between the those who govern and those who are governed".<sup>7</sup> To quote Edward Shils, "[T]he separation of the uneducated 'masses' immersed in their traditional

---

<sup>4</sup> These are studies that concentrate on a small group in a legislature based on religion, caste or gender. See, for example, V Prabhavati, *Perceptions, Motivations and Performance of Women Legislators: Andhra Pradesh State Legislature 1956-1983* (New Delhi: Classical Publishing, 1991); Maneesha Aroon Tikekar, *Scheduled Caste Legislators in Maharashtra: Socialization, Recruitment and Role in Modernization* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Bombay, 1986).

<sup>5</sup> The Lok Sabha strength of 545 includes two Anglo-Indian MPs nominated by the President.

<sup>6</sup> Figures compiled from David Butler, Ashok Lahiri & Prannoy Roy, *India Decides: Elections 1952-1991* (New Delhi: Living Media, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Myron Weiner, 'Political Integration and Political Development' in J L Finkle & R W Gables (Eds.), *Political Development and Social Change* (New York: John Wiley, 1966)

culture from the 'intellectuals' who have a modern education is representative of some disjunctions observable in the social structure of practically all the new states".<sup>8</sup>

Communication between the 'intellectuals' at the apex and the 'masses' at the base of the society is generally conducted through mediating linkages. In institutional terms, political parties, bureaucracy and media are the prime institutions that help in the process of integration. In behavioural terms, the interface is provided by influential social and political actors - the intermediate elite<sup>9</sup> and the local elite<sup>10</sup> - who occupy the continuum between the base and apex of the system. The influence of these elites could stem from their economic (signifying wealth), social (status), or political (power) positions. In the Indian context, the role of such intermediaries acquires more importance because the characteristics of 'masses' are not uniform. For example, even within a single state, the slum-dwellers in cities, the poor farmers in the countryside, and the tribals in the interior may have 'poverty' in common, but they are significantly divergent and not subject to the same mode of communication. MLAs, being important intermediaries, are a crucial instrument of linkage in this respect.

---

<sup>8</sup> Edward Shils, 'On the Comparative Study of New States' in Clifford Geertz (Ed.), *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* (New York: The Free Press, 1963)

<sup>9</sup> To quote Rajni Kothari, "Thus the most crucial link in the structure of political integration turned out to be not the national elite which sought to penetrate downward nor the local elite at the village level which was gradually drawn upward towards the system, but the emergence of an intermediate elite between these two levels and its operation both downward and upward, mediating between the decision-makers and support seekers on the one hand and the masses and their immediate leaders on the other. Labelled as 'middle-men' or 'link-men', these intermediate leaders have shown a remarkable capacity for commuting between tradition and modernity and in bringing about a pragmatic relationship between the two." *Politics in India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1970) p. 90

<sup>10</sup> Subrata Mitra identifies local elites (*Gaon Ka Netas*) as "men of a certain standing and influence on the village. They are essentially people in a leadership position within the village, but the fact that they act as the interface of the village with the world beyond it gives them public visibility outside the village as well." *Power, Protest and Participation: Local Elites and the Politics of Development in India* (London: Routledge, 1992) p. 76

This study stems from a conviction that, in the long run, unless these state level politicians can speak the language of India's national political elite and conversely unless the national elite understands them, the political modernization of India will continue to be stunted. Because MLAs are the most dependent on the mass below, they are a vital and a sensitive link in the process of vertical integration in India, particularly when we talk of elite-mass integration.<sup>11</sup> This is illustrated by Seshadri and Jain's interviews with electors, which indicate that a large proportion of rural voters gain their main political information from political leaders;<sup>12</sup> but this link can only work if MLAs become politically 'bilingual' - equally fluent in both political forms of discourse, the elite above and the mass below - thereby representing and mediating the demands of each.<sup>13</sup> Evidence from our field work suggests that the Indian MLAs, who relate easily to the mass electorate, may in varying degrees be distant but they are certainly not divorced from the modern language of the national elite in India.

## The Thesis

The present study is the result of interviews with 207 MLAs from five of India's twenty-five States. This number represents 15 % of the members from each Assembly.

---

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed treatment of the concept of Political Integration, see Myron Weiner, 'Political Integration and Political Development' in Finkle and Gable (Eds.), *Political Development and Social Change* (New York: John Wiley, 1966). See also James Manor, 'The Dynamics of Political Integration and Disintegration' in Jayaratnam Wilson & Dennis Dalton (Eds.) *The States of South Asia: Problems of National Integration* (London: C.Hurst, 1982) pp. 89-109. We use the term 'elite-mass integration' to signify both, integration at the level of 'ideas' (Weiner) and integration at the level of 'inter-action' (Manor)

<sup>12</sup> K Seshadri and S P Jain, *Panchayati Raj and Political Perceptions of Electorate* (Hyderabad: National Institute of Community Development, 1972). They interviewed 434 voters including 291 rural respondents. To the question 'What are the main sources of political information in your area?' the largest proportions of rural respondents identified radio and leaders.

<sup>13</sup> Perhaps there is a third language that the state level politicians must learn, that of the central bureaucracy in Delhi. Fluency in this would certainly add to their own effectiveness and productivity.



The States were selected to cover four different regions of India (see map 1) and their related linguistic, cultural and political variations. These are:

- **WEST BENGAL** - Eastern region - home of India's longest serving elected communist-led government. Language - Bengali;
- **MAHARASHTRA** - Western region - a Congress bastion since India's independence and considered India's commercial heartland. Language - Marathi;
- **TAMILNADU** - Southern region - a longstanding regional movement. Language - Tamil;
- **UTTAR PRADESH** - Northern region - India's most populous state. Located in the Hindi heartland, it had its first Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government at the time of our study; and,
- **HARYANA** - Northern region - a newer relatively more prosperous State. Allegedly casteist and corrupt. Language - Hindi.

In 1991, these five states together had a population of 357.71 million, 42.4% of India's population.<sup>14</sup> At least 15% of the strength of the assembly in each State was interviewed. We obtained a sample that would fairly represent the existing pattern in the respective assemblies (1990-92) based on *Who's Who* or the party lists made available to us.

Interviews with individual MLAs were based on a structured questionnaire (See appendix 1). The questions asked of the MLAs were both multiple-choice and open-ended. We needed to persuade the MLAs to speak frankly and give us candid answers, which could only be done if they could be guaranteed anonymity. Often we

---

<sup>14</sup> Computed from Census of India, 1991, paper no. 2 (provisional figures)

had to assure them that we were not putting names to specific views and that all we noted were respondent numbers.

Many questions were designed with supplementaries to get accurate responses. For example, in determining an MLA's residential status, we did not just ask him if he had a rural or an urban residence. We probed for more details such as whether he/she had more than one residence;<sup>15</sup> was this his ancestral home? For how many years has he lived there? We found several cases where MLAs routinely replied 'rural', but the supplementaries established that they had lived in an urban area for over a decade. Similarly, for many questions we asked them to briefly explain their answers, which always clarified the issue and ensured that the response was not ambiguous. Normally an interview took about an hour, but at least half the MLAs spent in the range of 90 minutes with the author. In about fifteen percent of the cases, the interviews lasted over two hours.

The resultant data are analysed in two ways. First on a state-wise basis for our entire sample; second, on a party-wise basis taking into account five main parties in these states, Cong.I, CPI(M), BJP, DMK and Janata Dal.<sup>16</sup> 87% of our sample is covered between these five parties. At the national level, in the 1989-91 Lok Sabha these parties accounted for 84% of the members (see Chapter III)

The interviews were conducted between September 1990 and May 1992 often under trying circumstances. This was the period during which India saw three Prime

---

<sup>15</sup> In our sample there were very few women, as they are poorly represented in state legislatures. For convenience therefore we use 'he' throughout the thesis.

<sup>16</sup> We take Janata Dal as the undivided entity that was the ruling partner in V P Singh's National Front government during 1990. Since then, however, this party has split into at least three factions, but for the purpose of our study we have clubbed all members of the various factions as members of the undivided Janata Dal.

Ministers, V P Singh (Dec.89-Nov.90), Chandrashekar (Nov.90 to Jun.91), and Narasimha Rao (Jun.91 ~) and the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi (May 91). The political scenario in India during this period was highly uncertain. Our first round of scheduled interviews in Haryana had to be hastily abandoned after we were trapped for four hours in an MLA's home consequent on anti-Mandal rioting and the imposition of a curfew in Kurukshetra. More than one visit to each state had to be made in order to get the required number of MLAs. We were fortunate that although the DMK government led by Karunanidhi in Tamilnadu was dismissed by the President of India during the period of our field work, this happened only after completion of all our interviews in the state.

Despite having been amply warned by some academics in Delhi about the hopelessness of attempting to interview a large number of MLAs across several states, we found that while the MLAs were indeed difficult to find, once an appointment was made, most of them kept it. Only occasionally were we let down, but these were exceptions.

The MLAs we interviewed were backbenchers. Ministers were avoided, as also were the opposition frontbenchers, because they might not be reasonably frank. Our initial experience with a handful of frontbenchers indicated that they usually said what 'sounded' politically correct.

Once the MLAs were at ease with our credentials, we found that most were fairly candid. The normal pattern in the interview was that the first ten/fifteen minutes established rapport, during which time the general questions were asked. By then the MLAs would feel free to respond in confidence to more important questions. Most absorbed the questions thoughtfully and gave considered responses. There were a few

instances where MLAs who had been previously interviewed sought the author again and added further to their responses. One MLA came back to the author the following day with these remarks:

I was thinking about your questions all night and thought that I had not given you a full picture on a few matters

This particular legislator then went on to delineate the extent of corruption pervading the system.

Since all interviews were conducted personally by the author, the answers are comparable. The questions were always asked in the same fashion. None of the questions were designed or posed in such a way which would lead to a response set; and all the answers were interpreted on an identical scale. We believe that this is a particular strength of the study.

Although the thesis contains some qualitative material, the author had designed to provide more qualitative information. Unfortunately, in July 1993, when the thesis was in its final stages, the author's flat was burgled and everything was removed including the computer and two sets of back-ups. A good deal of qualitative information was lost as a result, particularly information relating to the many 'off the record' conversations with several MLAs in each state. The thesis has had to be painstakingly recreated from hard copies and (luckily) some old back-up diskettes that were found in the rubble left behind. Regretfully, therefore, the thesis is missing some information that would have enhanced it.

## Background

The Indian Constitution established a democratic Republic as a Union of States.<sup>17</sup> At Union level, it provided for a Westminster-style parliament, and at State level, it provided for Legislative Assemblies modelled on the same constitutional lines. The Union Parliament consists of the President and two Houses: Rajya Sabha (The Council of States or Upper House), and Lok Sabha (The House of the People or Lower House). The State Legislative Assemblies consist of a Governor and either one House - the Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha) - or two Houses that include a Legislative Council (Vidhan Parishad). Most states have unicameral legislatures (having abolished their Legislative Councils) for which members are chosen by a direct election from territorial constituencies in the State.<sup>18</sup>

In principle, each territorial constituency is formed on the basis of population calculated roughly to accord equal representation to different parts of the same state. In practice, however, the size of the electorate varies both within a state and between different states.<sup>19</sup> The reasons are partly to be found in the large variation in the size of the states, and partly in the constituency delimitation exercises. The general rule for the Legislative Assemblies is to have a minimum of 60 and a maximum of 500 Members linked to the population of the state.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> The Government of India Act of 1935, laying down a 'quasi-federal' pattern of government for India, was considerably drawn upon in formulating independent India's constitution.

<sup>18</sup> Indian Parliament may, by law, abolish an existing Legislative Council if the proposal is initiated by a resolution of the Legislative Assembly of the concerned state. Currently, only five states have legislative Councils - Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

<sup>19</sup> For 1989 Assembly elections in Tamilnadu, the smallest constituency had 98,546 voters and the largest had 343,571 voters (A ratio of 1:3.5). Similarly in Maharashtra, the smallest constituency had 103,305 registered voters and the largest had 461,665 voters (A ratio of 1:4.4). On an inter-state comparison, generally the smaller states also have smaller constituencies in terms of number of voters.

<sup>20</sup> Exceptions are Sikkim 32, Goa 40, and Mizoram 40 members.

When we talk of states in the Indian context, we are often talking of large entities. Seven of India's twenty-five states have populations greater than that of the United Kingdom.<sup>21</sup> If Uttar Pradesh, India's largest state, were an independent country, it would rank fifth in the world behind China, USA, Indonesia, and Russia. There is a great deal of heterogeneity among Indian states linguistically, but also socio-culturally; the common dress, social festivals, caste and communal consciousness, basic beliefs and expressions can all be different making generalizations about India a risky exercise. An understanding of India's political system, therefore, must also depend on an understanding of the political patterns and behaviour in its constituent states.

This apart, the Indian constitution divides power between the centre and the states by creating extensive lists of issues which are placed under their separate and concurrent jurisdictions. The judiciary is empowered to prevent encroachments by one on the matters concerning the other. The state list is extensive and includes such crucial matters as agriculture, land reform, industry (subject to Union regulations), education (except scientific and some higher education), and law and order. The "concurrent" list contains subjects where both the Centre and states are empowered to act but in conflictual situations the Centre prevails. In addition, the Centre is provided with residuary powers.<sup>22</sup>

Although this gives the impression that the division of powers strengthens the Centre at the cost of the states, the Centre prevails only in a negative way by preventing state

---

<sup>21</sup> United Kingdom 55.61 million (Source: UN Demographic Year Book 1991): Uttar Pradesh 139.03, Bihar 86.33, Maharashtra 78.75, Andhra Pradesh 66.35, West Bengal 67.98, Madhya Pradesh 66.13, and Tamilnadu 55.64 million. There are also some small ones; eight states have a population of less than three million each. (Source: Census of India, 1991 - provisional figures).

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed discussion on Centre and State powers, see K R Bombwall, *The Foundations of Indian Federalism* (London: Asia Publishing, 1967)

governments from doing things that are considered opposed to national policies. The powers vested in the Centre cannot be used in a more positive way as, for example, to ensure that various economic and social policies are implemented effectively at state level. Except in the financial provisions, where the Centre has the right to determine policies for allocating tax revenues, the structure of the government hardly provides for central control over state policies and administration.<sup>23</sup> It follows that a failure of state level administration must reflect on national achievements. This has been long recognised, and several scholars have concentrated on state-level politics.<sup>24</sup>

Clearly, state politics is closer to the people. It is with state-level institutions and bureaucracy that people have to deal on a day-to-day basis. State-level politics is still largely conducted in the traditional idiom<sup>25</sup> where loyalties are based on caste, kinship, and local factions, and the resultant politics becomes 'identity-based' in the

---

<sup>23</sup> Francine Frankel, *India's Political Economy: The Gradual Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978) p.81. Paul Appleby (Report on a survey of Public Administration in India, 1954) had commented that by such precise allocation of powers between central government and the states, "India is strait-jacketed to a degree found in no other important federal nation". (p.7)

<sup>24</sup> Among others, Paul Brass, Jim Manor, Atul Kohli, Francine Frankel, Tom Nossiter and Paul Wallace.

<sup>25</sup> W H Morris-Jones, *The Government and Politics of India* (Huntington: The Eothen Press, 1987) listed three political idioms: 'modern', 'traditional', and 'saintly'. There is every reason to believe that if a saintly idiom existed it passed away with the death of the saint, Mahatma Gandhi, himself. (ch.2). We use these terms reluctantly, as Morris-Jones did himself, because we do not wish to convey that all traditional is undesirable and conversely all modern desirable. In any case, there is a debate whether instead of moving to modernity, the traditional can in reality adapt itself and move on to something that Geertz calls "post traditional". We use the terms more in line with Myron Weiner who argues that the traditional culture in the Indian districts may be permeated with traditional elements but it is "not wholly traditional, for it has many modern components." Likewise he argues while the culture predominating New Delhi, the armed forces and the English speaking intelligentsia, is "expressed in modern language and is permeated with elements which we normally think of as modern, it is not wholly modern, for it has many traditional components. [See 'India: Two Political Cultures' in Lucien Pye and S Verba (Eds.) *Political Culture and Political Development*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965)]. We use these terms throughout the thesis only to specify politics which is more inclined to be traditional-identity based as against Westminster norms of politics - norms on which India largely based itself.

sense that people get involved not on the basis of 'what' issue is being debated but 'who' is debating it. This appears to be one reason why the electoral turn-out for state elections is often higher than in national elections.<sup>26</sup> In four of our five states, excluding UP, turn-out in the last two elections was higher for the state assembly 6 times out of 8.

State legislatures, which were "never great and active arenas at the best of times",<sup>27</sup> have further declined in power in the last thirty years. If there was ever accountability of Chief Ministers to the Assembly, this has greatly diminished. During our interviews in Haryana we were told by several MLAs that the assembly was convened only to meet the procedural and constitutional requirements. There appears some substance to their allegations as in our five states the number of assembly sittings (days) during the year 1991 were as follows: Haryana 19, Maharashtra 44, West Bengal 49, Tamilnadu 38, and Uttar Pradesh 23. Even the Lok Sabha had only 90 sitting days during the same year.<sup>28</sup> As a comparison, British House of Commons routinely has about 180 sitting days.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Uttar Pradesh is a notable exception. The Electoral turn over in this state is in any case lower than other major states but for the last four state assembly elections compared to Lok Sabha elections the turnout for the former has been consistently lower. Lok Sabha figures first: 50%:46.1%, 55.8%:44.9%, 51.3%:45.7%. The figures for the last two elections for our other four states are; Haryana 66.8%:69.9% and 64.4%:71.2%, Maharashtra 61.7%:59.2% and 59.1%:59.9%, Tamilnadu 73.0%:73.4% and 66.7%:69.1%, and West Bengal 78.6%:79.9% and 79.7%:75.6%. (Source: David Butler, Ashok Lahiri, & Prannoy Roy, *India Decides: Elections 1952-1991* (New Delhi: Living Media, 1991))

<sup>27</sup> W H Morris-Jones, *The Government and Politics of India* (Huntington: The Eothen Press, 1987), Epilogue, p. 270. Even during the Nehru-era there were instances of Chief Ministers running their states as their personal fiefdoms as seen in the corruption charges against them. Pratap Singh Kairon (Punjab), Bakshi Gulam Mohammed (Kashmir), and Biju Patnaik (Orissa) are cases in point. See, G S Bhargava, *India's Watergate: A Study of Political Corruption in India* (New Delhi: Arnold Heumann, 1974)

<sup>28</sup> Source: Various State Assembly reports. For Lok Sabha, *Dates of Commencement and Termination of the Sessions of the Lok Sabha from 1952-1993* (Lok Sabha Secretariat Publications, 1993) p. 8

<sup>29</sup> See, Robert Borthwick, 'The flow of the House' in Michael Ryle & Peter Richards (Eds.), *The Commons under Scrutiny* (London: Routledge, 1988)



Part of the reason for the decline in the significance of state assemblies may be that the weakness of political institutions has helped to move the core of Indian politics from institutions to personalities.<sup>30</sup> During Mrs. Gandhi's regime, unstable state governments, both Congress and non-Congress, paralysed by internal factions became commonplace.<sup>31</sup> Congress Chief Ministers were propped up by her support without any independent power base in their own states, often short circuiting established practices, thereby further weakening the institutional foundations of the Assembly. By the same logic, however, MLAs have personally become more powerful mainly through their ability to support or destabilise state leadership.<sup>32</sup> Those looking for an understanding of India's political culture therefore need to take full account of MLAs.

### **An Overview**

Dismissing pessimistic speculations about India's future, Morris-Jones wrote in 1967 that "It is India's fate to attract prophets of gloom....It is her achievement to disappoint them".<sup>33</sup> From the time India became independent in 1947, doubts were expressed whether it would be able to sustain democracy. The general argument was based on the evolutionary concept<sup>34</sup> that traditional societies embarking on modernization inevitably face some 'transitional' ferment arising out of the

---

<sup>30</sup> For a general argument on this issue, see Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968). Institutionalization and personalities are argued to have an inversely proportional relationship. Weak institutions tend to strengthen the power of personalities. "...the weakness of political institutions means that authority and office are easily acquired and easily lost" p. 197

<sup>31</sup> Francine Frankel, *India's Political Economy*.. op.cit., p.363-381.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Brass, *The New Cambridge History of India IV.1: The Politics of India Since Independence*, (Hyderabad, India: Orient Longman, 1990) p. 106

<sup>33</sup> 'Language and Region within the Indian Union' in Philip Mason (Ed.) *India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) p. 57 footnote

<sup>34</sup> Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (The Free Press, 1958)

contradictions that exist between what Morris-Jones called the ‘traditional’ and the ‘modern’ idioms.<sup>35</sup>

A traditional society is seen to be isolated from any notion of a centre. It is mostly rural, illiterate, non-participant, and the norms of authority are also kinship or group (caste and community) related. Transactions are not simply cash-based and people’s horizons are limited by their locale. As a society modernises, its area of interaction expands. Its people become literate, urban, industrial and participatory. A more ‘legal-rational’ basis of authority begins to replace the traditional religious and ethnic forms of authority. The inherent notion of ‘equality’ in a modernizing democratic society conflicts head-on with the traditional and generally unquestioned rural hierarchy. In India’s case, these contradictions, exacerbated by extreme heterogeneity and resultant cleavages, were thought to be a potential source of crises and fragmentation.

Soon after Independence in the early 1950s, concern grew when the Congress government dragged its feet on the question of redrawing state boundaries on a linguistic basis.<sup>36</sup> In the wake of Partition, there were fears that creating linguistic states would be a potential source of instability. Nehru himself was reluctant to accept this issue and feared serious consequences for the country;<sup>37</sup> but agitation and

---

<sup>35</sup> See footnote 25

<sup>36</sup> A good idea of India’s linguistic diversity is given in the following extracts from the 1980 speech of Kerala’s then CM, Mr. E K Nayanar, “While our constitution recognises a mere fifteen languages, the *Kendriya Sahitya Academy* has recognised 22 languages. But the fact of life is that today journals, newspapers and books are published in at least 59 languages.” quoted in Anirudh Prasad, *Centre and State Powers under Indian Federalism*, (New Delhi: Deep & Deep, 1981) p. 294

<sup>37</sup> Congress party formed a committee in 1948 consisting of Nehru, Patel and Sitaramayya on the issue of linguistic states. The report, drafted by Nehru, advised against an early formulation of linguistic states and suggested that the matter be deferred for ten years. Nehru also spoke in the parliament to this effect. See S Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, Volume Two (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979) p. 257

violence in Andhra, climaxed by Potti Sriramula's fast to death in December 1952, forced the government to concede.

In 1953, Andhra Pradesh not only became India's first "linguistic state" but also helped set in motion events which, by 1956, resulted in the linguistic reorganisation of states. Some argued that this could be a precursor to the break up of India.<sup>38</sup> But India demonstrated a resilience that not all thought it possessed. The linguistic reorganization of states took place, over time and with some violence, but without endangering India's territorial integrity in any serious way. Belying further prophecies of collapse of the system,<sup>39</sup> India embarked on its ambitious programme of Community Development and state-led industrialization. The Planning Commission, set up in 1950 to formulate India's economic blueprint acquired status and authority: "there was a feeling abroad that at last a decisive break had been made with the economic stagnation of former years, and that Indians, with the help of a fairly modest quantum of foreign assistance, could really 'do it themselves'."<sup>40</sup> Morris-Jones, then, was among many who looked at India with optimism. By 1987, however, when Morris-Jones published the epilogue to the third edition of his classic *Government and Politics in India*, he was less certain. Much had changed in a relatively short twenty years and the early optimism had largely vanished.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> For example, this quote from Arnold Toynbee, "will India succeed in carrying out this experiment (linguistic states) without bringing on herself eastern Europe's tragic fate," *East to West: A Journey Round the World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958) p. 101

<sup>39</sup> The most quoted is Selig Harrison, *The Most Dangerous Decades* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958). See also Eugene Staley, *The Future of the Underdeveloped Countries* (Harper & Brothers, 1954) p. 174.

<sup>40</sup> A H Hanson, *The Process of Planning: A Study of India's Five Year Plans 1950-1964*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) p. 122

<sup>41</sup> See *The Government and Politics of India*, op.cit., p. 268

In some ways India is an enigma for the political scientist. Its very survival as a democracy presents problems for assumed relations between political order and stability. Many shocks associated with the breakdown of democracies took place in India: a young Indian democracy was handed a humiliating defeat in the 1962 war with the Peoples Republic of China - an event that could have been fatal to the political system;<sup>42</sup> political succession after Nehru's death - particularly with the debate "After Nehru Who?"<sup>43</sup> - was potentially destabilizing but, in practice, smooth; Mrs. Gandhi's "Emergency" proved an aberration and not a precedent for generating a dictatorial bias for the polity; and most of all, the shocks of two political assassinations, Indira Gandhi (1984) and Rajiv Gandhi (1991), which could have pushed India into the throes of anarchy, were absorbed by the system.

These challenges arose from unforeseen events but there are other, more permanent, conditions that continue: strong sub-national identities, based upon caste, language, culture, and religion, the persisting high numbers below even the "official" poverty line,<sup>44</sup> and, political institutions both inherited and indigenously created (e.g. Panchayati Raj) in a state of decline. Demands on government exceed its capacity to

---

<sup>42</sup> For a discussion on why defeat in wars might destabilise a new democracy, see Michael Crozier, Samuel Huntington, and Joji Watanuki (Eds.), *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission* (New York University Press, 1975) p.4

<sup>43</sup> This was the title of Welles Hangen's book published in 1963. He comments that there is a "notion that only Nehru stands between India and leaderless chaos" (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963) p. vii

<sup>44</sup> Studies done by L R Jain (Indian Statistical Institute) and Suresh Tendulkar (Delhi School of Economics) provide the following percentages below the poverty line for the year 1987-88: Rural 45% and Urban 37%. These are substantially higher than the government's official figures of 33% and 20% respectively. (Source: *India Today*, 15 Dec. 1992, p.125). In absolute terms it means over 250 million people in rural India, and over 75 million in Urban India - a total of over 325 million, well above the population of United States.

respond, compounded by the growing corruption and politicization of the bureaucracy<sup>45</sup>.

Despite all the above, and the extreme diversity and critical expansion of its population, India's success in maintaining democracy and its territorial integrity is a unique achievement 'unparalleled by any other'.<sup>46</sup> This enigma has attracted differing explanations.

One explanation revolves around India's diversity which, on the one hand creates cleavages, but on the other is also instrumental in localizing conflict.<sup>47</sup> Many shocks thus become 'local' or 'regional' in character instead of engulfing the nation. Since Indian society remains highly fragmented along the lines of local identity, protest in one region generally finds scant support in other regions, and often within the same region one group can remain isolated in its protest. Revolts, therefore, may be plenty but they do not add up to revolution. Ghanshyam Shah illustrates several spontaneous rebellions but almost all localised.<sup>48</sup> In the Marxian mode, the strong presence of local loyalties in terms of caste or ethnicity has also prevented the building up of a

---

<sup>45</sup> Several scholars have written about these issues. See Rajni Kothari, *Politics and the People: In Search of a Humane India*, Two Volumes, (New York: New Horizons Press, 1989); Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Myron Weiner, *The Indian Paradox: Essays in Indian Politics* (New Delhi: Sage, 1989); Lloyd and Sussane Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

<sup>46</sup> Paul Brass, *The New Cambridge History of India Volume IV.1: The Politics of India Since Independence* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1990) particularly chapter 10.

<sup>47</sup> Robert L Hardgrave, *India Under Pressure: Prospects for Political Stability* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1984) p. 2

<sup>48</sup> See Ghanshyam Shah, "Grass-Roots Mobilization in Indian Politics" in Atul Kohli (Ed.) *India's Democracy: An Analysis of Changing State-Society Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988). Also examples of larger movements like the Naxalite movement in the late sixties and early 1970s show how easy it was for a movement to be localised on the basis of restricted identity. Other scholars have written on the same theme. See, for example, James Manor *The Dynamics of Integration* op. cit., and Rajni Kothari, *Politics in India* op. cit.

'class' loyalty. India has thus remained far away from the Marxian determinism of class consciousness and class conflict despite considerable exploitation of the lower classes.<sup>49</sup>

However, the most popular explanation centres around, a) the presence of relatively stable political institutions which existed under the colonial rule and which were inherited by India, and, b) the long history of the Indian Congress movement and its legitimate and well established leadership.<sup>50</sup>

Myron Weiner wrote in 1985, "Of the imperial powers, only the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom have an impressive record of leaving behind their distinctive political institutions in the countries they once occupied."<sup>51</sup> Now in 1993, the Soviet Union itself has disintegrated, let alone its system of governance in other countries. The Westminster system is the only transplant that has managed to survive so far; admittedly, not in all, not even in most former colonies of the British Empire, but in

---

<sup>49</sup> For example, landless labour and labour in the unorganised sector. To quote Shah (ibid p. 280) "Landless agricultural labourers, who constitute 25% of the workforce, belong mainly to the Scheduled castes, Backward castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Muslim community. Their absolute numbers are about 55 million....They have nothing to sell except their labour and most of them find work for about six months a year. On an average they are paid Rs. 4 per day for agricultural operations... The Minimum Wage Regulations are hardly ever enforced". This is also affirmed by T J Nossiter, *Marxist State Governments in India* (London: Pinter, 1988). In relation to Kerala's landless labourers, he comments that they "generally lack continuous employment owing to the seasonality of the farmer's need for additional workers. Probably not more than a quarter of the field labourers work more than 200 days a year and alternative employment in the off-season is rare." (p. 55-6) The Government of India official figures show that, in absolute numbers, agricultural labourers in 1981 totalled 5.55 crores (55 million), while the total labour in the organised sector was 2.57 crores - 1.83 public sector & 0.74 private sector. (Source: *India 1990*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting).

<sup>50</sup> Following Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), academic discourse is agreed on stable political institutions being a pre-requisite for stable democracy. For the Indian case, this is a recurring theme. See, for example, Rajni Kothari, *Politics in India*, Morris-Jones, *The Government and Politics of India*, Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent*.

<sup>51</sup> 'Institution Building in India,' in Ashutosh Varshney (Ed.), *The Indian Paradox* (New Delhi: Sage, 1989)

a noticeable number. Among these, India has been often quoted as the foremost example of parliamentary democracy, "by most conventional measures of political participation, electoral and party competition, and persistence of parliamentary institutions".<sup>52</sup>

In retrospect, the odds against this were phenomenal. Of some fifty states that have become independent since 1945, and started with a written constitution aimed at a representative and democratic political system, only a handful have some semblance of democracy today.<sup>53</sup> If a phenomenon is so general, the odds against India were clearly stacked and to have overcome them is a great achievement. This general experience elsewhere, however, highlights both the fragility of India's democracy and the extraordinary efforts that will continue to be needed to preserve India's political arrangements.

### **Institutional Decline**

Today, scholars are generally agreed that India's political institutions, beginning with the decline of that 'great meeting place'<sup>54</sup> the Congress Party, have been in a state of decay for some time. Of course, the single and significant exception is the institution of 'competitive democracy' itself, but even this is currently under threat from a rising wave of sub-nationalism. In fact, the debate has moved on from

---

<sup>52</sup> Paul Brass, *The New Cambridge History of India, The Politics of India Since Independence*. op. cit. p. 334

<sup>53</sup> Dankwart A Rostow, *A World of Nations: Problems of Political Modernization* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1967) ch. vii

<sup>54</sup> Morris-Jones W H, *The Government and Politics of India*, op. cit. p. 263-64

institutional decline,<sup>55</sup> to ungovernability,<sup>56</sup> to sub-nationalism and political viability.<sup>57</sup>

Curiously, in the debate on institutional decline the central theme seems to be that institutions set up under Nehru's leadership progressively declined after his death, particularly during the post-1967 years, i.e. under Mrs. Gandhi's leadership.<sup>58</sup> This approach, however, overlooks "the frailty of the structures in the earlier epoch."<sup>59</sup> The institutional structure adopted by India was essentially a top-down arrangement, initiated through the actions of a central elite. It is questionable whether it penetrated into the lower layers of society. Arguably, the traditionally instituted ways of handling local affairs at the 'periphery' continued generally untouched by the modernizing institutions of independent India. It is clear, with hindsight, that India created political institutions at the Centre without attempting to provide the social, economic and educational foundations for them at the periphery.<sup>60</sup> A H Hanson, in reference to Indian planning, called it "the isolation of the Indian intellectuals from the Indian masses".<sup>61</sup> Certainly little, if any, attempt was made to create a social

---

<sup>55</sup> Several scholars have written extensively on this issue. Among others, Rajni Kothari, Morris-Jones, Myron Weiner, Francine Frankel, and Paul Brass.

<sup>56</sup> Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability*, op.cit.

<sup>57</sup> Ashutosh Varshney, 'India: Liberalism versus Nationalism' in the *Journal of Democracy*, July 1992.

<sup>58</sup> W H Morris-Jones, *The Government and Politics of India* op. cit., especially Epilogue; Rajni Kothari, *State Against Democracy: In Search of Humane Governance* (Delhi: Ajanta, 1988) Ch.13; A.Shouri, *Symptoms of Fascism* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1978)

<sup>59</sup> Sudipta Kaviraj, 'On the Crisis of Political Institutions in India' in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.)18, 2 (1984)

<sup>60</sup> See Raj Vasil, *Governing Singapore* (Singapore: Mandarin, 1992). Also see Vir Chopra, 'The Imperative of Reform' in Subhash Kashyap (Ed.) *Reforming the Constitution* (New Delhi:UBSPD, 1992)

<sup>61</sup> A H Hanson, 'The Crisis of Indian Planning' in *Planning and the Politicians* (London: Routledge, 1969). He says that the planners based their policies on "the assumption of a degree of unity and common purpose among the agriculturists which bears no relation to reality of the faction-ridden, caste-divided, and class-divided Indian village." pp. 179-92



design compatible with the institutional structure being set up. Frankel puts it succinctly,

It is, in fact, arguable that politics in the Nehru period as a whole is best understood as a continuum with the Raj. Whatever social configurations the Congress party confronted at the various states, its leaders, like the British before them, did not attempt to change the social order but to adapt to it.<sup>62</sup>

It is in this context that we can understand the caste affinities of the early Congress political machinery, headed by the first post-independence leadership. Despite all of Nehru's ideological moorings, the Congress official lists of candidates, even for the first general election in 1952, were carefully prepared to appeal to traditional caste loyalties, reinforcing the existing social design.<sup>63</sup>

The post Nehru era hastened the decline of these institutions. During Mrs. Gandhi's regime (1967 onwards), as several states elected non-Congress governments for the first time, whatever pretensions India might have had to 'genuine' federalism were quickly dropped. Bureaucracy and the Judiciary were politicised<sup>64</sup> and corruption escalated with political quiescence. 'Small' regional men were given seats of power based only on perceived personal loyalty and, of course, the ability to generate funds for the increasingly money-hungry party machine. Secularism was redefined. It no longer meant that religious factors could not influence public decisions but that religions now had equal right to intervene in public domain.<sup>65</sup> Political parties, especially the Congress party, were weakened considerably and the general political culture deteriorated as unruly behaviour in the State Assemblies and even in

---

<sup>62</sup> Francine Frankel & M S A Rao (Eds.), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India*, Vol.II (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990) p. 502

<sup>63</sup> Francine R Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947-1977: The Gradual Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978) p. 92

<sup>64</sup> J R Siwach, *Dynamics of Indian Government and Politics*, Second revised edition (New Delhi: Sterling, 1990)

<sup>65</sup> Sudipta Kaviraj, 'On the Crisis of Political Institutions in India', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, No.2, 1984.

Parliament was tacitly accepted. Engineered defections of legislators from one political party to another, both in the national Parliament and in state Assemblies, added another dimension to the degeneration of political culture.<sup>66</sup> Most recently, India's secular traditions have stood exhausted before a resurgent Hindu Nationalism.<sup>67</sup> The outcome has been a rapid decline in the legitimacy of India's institutions.

### Centre → Periphery

One salient feature of post-Nehru India is that politics has been progressively regionalised.<sup>68</sup> Paradoxically, Mrs. Gandhi's efforts at centralizing power helped rather than hindered this tendency.<sup>69</sup> In the Nehru era, politics in India was dominated by the Congress, and relations between the Centre and states were really relations dictated by party hierarchy and party policy. Nehru's own towering position at the apex of the party, as well as the nation, helped sustain this position. Any

---

<sup>66</sup> The post-1967 Congress electoral losses enabled opposition to form coalition governments in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and West Bengal. However, they collapsed one by one mainly through engineered defections, typically involving payments or political favours in return. See Kanan Gahrana, 'Parliamentary System and Unitarianism in India: Is a Systemic Change Needed?' in *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. L1, No.3, July-Sept 1990, p. 352. See also Subhash C Kashyap, *The Politics of Defection* (New Delhi: National, 1968)

<sup>67</sup> The reference here is to the demolition of the Babri-Mosque structure by a Hindu mob on the 6th Dec. 1992, and to the communal riots thereafter dominated by the anti-muslim pogrom in Bombay extensively reported by the Indian and international media. For an excellent discussion on Hindu Nationalism, see Ashutosh Varshney, 'Contested Meanings: India's National Identity, Hindu Nationalism and the Politics of Anxiety' paper presented at the conference of *The Journal of Asian Studies* on "Dimensions of Ethnic and Cultural Nationalism in Asia", Milwaukee, WI, Feb. 26-27, 1993, subsequently published in *Daedalus*, Summer 1993. See also Tapan Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right* (London: Sangam Books, 1993)

<sup>68</sup> See Paul Brass, 'Pluralism, Regionalism, and Decentralizing Tendencies in Contemporary Indian Politics' in A Jeyaratnam Wilson & Dennis Dalton (Eds.), *The State of South Asia: Problems of National Integration* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1982)

<sup>69</sup> This again is a well explored theme. See particularly, Paul Brass, 'Pluralism, Regionalism and Decentralizing Tendencies in Contemporary Indian Politics' in A J Wilson & Dennis Dalton (Eds.) *The States of South Asia: Problems of National Integration* op. cit. Also see Vernon Hewitt, *Locating the Internal Emergency: Congress Politics and India 1967-77* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford University, 1987)

problems, either factional at state level, or between the state and the arms of the central bureaucracy, were resolved through the intervention of the party High Command whose authority and legitimacy remained unquestioned up to Nehru's death in 1964, as evidenced by the Kamaraj Plan of 1963 under which several senior Congress Chief Ministers were made to resign.<sup>70</sup>

In a way, at that time, India simultaneously operated two sets of political idioms<sup>71</sup>. One 'modern', largely at the Centre, that of national integration, central planning, and secularism and the other 'traditional', typically at the periphery, that of factional politics, caste affiliations, communalism and various other patronage networks.<sup>72</sup>

'Modern' policies of the Centre were often in conflict with 'traditional' interests at the periphery. Interestingly, elites at the periphery had learnt two languages, supporting the Centre's ideology in principle, but simultaneously following its own local logic in practice. Nehru's ineffectual efforts at land reforms, perhaps, constitute the principal example of this duality when all proposed legislation was supported enthusiastically at the Centre but efforts for its implementation at state level were equally frustrated, generally in deference to powerful local vested interests.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> See K C Chaudhry, *Congress in Free India: The Nehru Phase* (New Delhi: Neelaj Publications, 1980) pp.52-59. Under the Kamaraj Plan all Congress ministers at the Centre and state Chief Ministers had to submit their resignation. Nehru then selectively chose six ministers of Central Government and six Chief Ministers whose resignations were accepted.

<sup>71</sup> See footnote 25.

<sup>72</sup> Paul Brass, *Caste, Faction & Party in Indian Politics Vol. One* (Delhi: Chanakya, 1984) p.5

<sup>73</sup> Robert L Hardgrave Jr., and Stanley Kochanek, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation*, 4th Edition (San Diego, CA: Harcourt, 1986) p. 172. Also see Francine R Frankel, *India's Political Economy, 1947-1977: The Gradual Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978) ch. 4; H Venkatasubbiah, *Indian Economy Since Independence* (London: Asia Publishing, 1961)

For a long time these two ideologies, conflictual as they were, enjoyed a symbiotic existence. In retrospect, one can see that their forays into each other's domain were unequal and that the 'traditional' base was able to penetrate the 'modern' apex far more than the latter was able to influence the former. To a large extent, the foundations of this phenomenon lie not simply in India's socio-economic structure but in her political arrangements. The multi-party and adult franchise system adopted by India seems to be geared progressively to move in this direction. Each successive generation of politicians has found it expedient to appeal to narrower identities to garner electoral support. This has involved an increasing use of the 'traditional' language of politics.

More importantly, India's interventionist government controls the greatest share of national resources and these are distributed mainly at state level.<sup>74</sup> Most of the Centre's developmental projects and policies are handled at the state level. The state level politician, therefore, cannot afford to think in terms of ideology or grand policy; his principal concern is with the nitty gritty of local hegemony in matters of cornering state patronage for his group of supporters and constituents. In determining who should be the beneficiary of his efforts, parochial and factional loyalties reign supreme. Several of independent India's policies, e.g., Reservation policy, or the Muslim Personal Law,<sup>75</sup> have contributed to strengthening these local loyalties because benefits to its members have flowed not through perceived benefits granted

---

<sup>74</sup> For example, devolution of resources from the Centre to the States have increased from Rs. 8,817 crores (88.1 billion) in 1980-81 to Rs. 33,948 crores (339.4 billion) in 1990-91<sup>E</sup> (Source: Indian Economic Statistics, Public Finance 1990, Ministry of Finance)

<sup>75</sup> Arguably, the Reservation policy as embodied in the Constitution has created a vested interest in backwardness. All benefits to the community are perceived by them to have been gained through their own organised political strength. This strengthens local loyalties. The same may be true of the Muslim Personal law under which Muslims are given special and exclusive considerations ostensibly because of religious beliefs. An example is that Muslims alone are permitted polygamy. See Mohammad Ghouse, *Secularism Society and Law in India* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1973) last chapter.

by the “Indian state” but by the perceived hegemony or bargaining power of their own group.<sup>76</sup> This dichotomy between the two political cultures - Centre and State - has proved dysfunctional to the building up of strong and effective institutions in India.

### **Periphery → Centre**

The literature on institutional decline in India has implicitly focused on a top-down approach inferring that the actions or non-actions of the Centre are the main determinants of the vitality of India’s political institutions. While it is easy to see that the first initiative towards establishing and nurturing institutions must come from the national elite, the logic changes once the institutions interact with the periphery. To quote Montesquieu,<sup>77</sup>

At the birth of societies, it is the leaders of the commonwealth who create the institutions; afterwards, it is the institutions that shape the leaders.

We can go a step further and postulate that, given a time-lag, the periphery generates its own dynamics which flow back to the institutions and, in turn, exert influence on their structure. If the periphery is permitted to decay, its decline rises upward to the institutions. Kaviraj discusses this point effectively, pointing out that the Indian state seems to have followed a strategy whereby “Institutional structures have been informally disaggregated to defend the ‘core sector’ to the detriment of its periphery.”<sup>78</sup> He argues that policy makers have attempted to protect small select sectors, generally to the benefit of the influential middle class, on the assumption that

---

<sup>76</sup> We are not making any value judgements here. The argument is simply that the unintended and indirect consequences of even desirable policies can turn the advantage to the ‘traditional’ language of politics as opposed to the ‘modern’

<sup>77</sup> Cited in Dankwart A Rostow, *A World of Nations* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1967) p. 156

<sup>78</sup> Sudipta Kaviraj, “On the Crisis of Political Institutions in India” in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.)18, 2 (1984)

standards could be selectively maintained; but this does not work in the long run as it soon becomes politically unpalatable to protect any sector for any one class. He provides the example of select educational institutions where efforts to maintain high quality niches of excellence have failed because “these are fed by other parts of the structure which have been permitted to decay”.<sup>79</sup> We can relate this to that venerable institution, the civil service. As early as 1964, the Santhanam Committee reported that import licensing had become a racket to fill public servants’ pockets.<sup>80</sup> Others have pointed to the increasing corruption in bureaucracy.<sup>81</sup> The crux of the argument is that excellence cannot survive when surrounded by progressive decay. Between the Centre and the periphery, there will always be intermediate levels and the one immediately below the Centre must sustain acceptable standards for recruitment and assimilation by the Centre. If not, then the rot spreads upwards.

Applying this logic to Indian political culture, this decay has caught up with the national level politics. Decorum was generally maintained in the Parliament under Nehru. This was supposed to trickle down to the state assemblies. Instead, it is Parliament which has been affected by the rowdy culture of the state assemblies. The argument is not related to the reasons for the decay in state-level political behaviour, but to the fact that once poor behaviour was accepted at state level, its exclusion from parliament was almost impossible. The state assemblies eventually feed the

---

<sup>79</sup> Sudipta Kaviraj, *Ibid.*, p. 240

<sup>80</sup> The Santhanam Committee: *Report of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption*, Govt. of India, Min. of Home Affairs, New Delhi, 1964, p. 18.

<sup>81</sup> See, for example, John B Monteiro, “The Dimensions of Corruption in India” in Arnold Heidenheimer (Ed.) *Political Corruption: Readings in Comparative Analysis* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1978). In an illuminating study, V Rajagopalan, *The Political Economy of Agrarian Policies in Kerala: A Study of State Intervention in Agricultural Commodity Markets with particular reference to Dairy Markets* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, London School of Economics & Political Science, University of London, 1993), refers to the increasingly rent-seeking behaviour of not just the politicians but the bureaucrats as well.

Parliament, as seen in the fact that in the present Lok Sabha (1993), 38% of the MPs were previously MLAs in their own states.<sup>82</sup> The relationship of the periphery with the central institutions is, therefore, one of mutual causality. The view that restricts itself to a top-downward dynamics can only see part of the problem.

This periphery-Centre relationship brings home the importance of state legislators as key actors influencing the development of political culture at the state level. In the 1989 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections over 100 people were alleged to be killed during electioneering and re-poll was ordered in 1599 booths;<sup>83</sup> but, viewing the 1990 Assembly elections, Bihar alone claimed 80 deaths in poll violence and re-polling had to be ordered in 1165 booths due to 'booth capturing' and 'corrupt electoral practices'.<sup>84</sup> This incremental deterioration was also reflected in the fact that there were 40 legislators who had patently criminal records.<sup>85</sup> Violence has become a part of electoral scene. Agrawal and Agarwal illustrate several cases in different states indicating that violence has spread to most Indian states.<sup>86</sup>

The use of organised violence to achieve political power originates largely in local politics where landed castes have routinely used violence, actual or threatened, to

---

<sup>82</sup> Computed from *Tenth Lok Sabha, Who's Who 1992* (Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1992)

<sup>83</sup> M P Singh (Ed.), *Lok Sabha Elections, 1989: Indian Politics in 1990s* (Delhi: Kalinga Publications, 1992) p. 21-22

<sup>84</sup> S P Agrawal & J C Aggarwal, *Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha Elections 1989-1990* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1990). The terms 'booth-capturing' and 'corrupt electoral practices' are euphemisms for violence by politicians and their hired thugs to intimidate electors or capture polling booths to rig the results.

<sup>85</sup> Times of India, Metro Edition, New Delhi, 9 March 1990.

<sup>86</sup> S P Agrawal & J C Agarwal *op. cit.*, pp. 235-43

capture control of Panchayats and Cooperatives.<sup>87</sup> This logic has, over a period of time, caught up with state-level politics. The question arises as to how soon it will catch up with national politics.<sup>88</sup> Any attempt at strengthening central political institutions must simultaneously focus on the state-level political elite to minimise the physical and communication 'gap' between the essentially 'modern' institutions and the 'traditional' state politicians.

MLAs are also a strategic link for national integration. The evidence of our study shows a sense of a larger Indian identity among MLAs. To the question whether India needed a strong centre, most of even the regionally oriented MLAs - e.g., DMK in Tamilnadu - replied in the affirmative (see Chapter XVII). This perception of their part may well be an important factor in India's political stability. A similar emphasis is made in Subrata Mitra's study of truly local elites. He finds an important, though qualified, explanation for the resilience of Indian democracy "*in the complex political repertoire of her local elites and their remarkable blend of institutional participation and collective protest.*"<sup>89</sup> The focus is on the argument that elites at middle and lower levels have demonstrated a remarkable ability to incorporate newer structures of influence and authority and ease out the traditional ones without a breakdown of the system; and this is one of the critical determinants of political stability in India.

---

<sup>87</sup> There is a host of literature on this. See, for example, Sri P K Deb, 'Working of Panchayati Raj in Orissa' in A P Padhi (Ed.), *Indian State Politics: A case study of Orissa* (Delhi: B R Publishing, 1985) pp. 247-283

<sup>88</sup> In practice there will always be a gap between the apex and the base. The question is one of minimizing it. Perhaps neither the apex nor the base can overpower the other but the equilibrium arrived at might be at a relatively lower or a higher point between the 'modern' and the 'traditional' depending on which of the two cultures dominates.

<sup>89</sup> Subrata K Mitra, *Power, Protest and Participation: Local Elites and the Politics of India* (London: Routledge, 1992) p. 241



## **The Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is organised into eighteen chapters. In the first chapter we argue that state level legislators are important political actors by virtue of their strategic position in state level political organisation. We provide a brief background to India's political development since independence, with special reference to the decline of its political institutions and examine the interaction between Centre and periphery to support the argument that their relationship is one of mutual causality. Viewed in this fashion, the political actors at the periphery assume greater importance than they are generally accorded in academic discourse. In particular, we view them as a vital component of the intermediate elite in India and believe that they have a critical linkage function in the communication between apex and base.

Chapter two discusses the conceptual and functional aspects of both legislatures and the legislators who occupy them and give them meaning. On a comparative perspective, it argues that the generally accepted typologies of legislatures as well as legislators are unsatisfactory in the case of Indian state legislatures. It is in the indirect consequences of their existence - their role in 'integration' and in 'providing legitimacy' to those who govern - that they serve an important role in India. The chapter also reviews the available literature on Indian MLAs.

Chapters three through nine present the responses of the MLAs to our structured questionnaire. We analyse these first on a state-wise basis (across party affiliations) and second on a party-wise basis taking five main national parties into account which between them shared 84% of seats in the 1989 Lok Sabha.<sup>90</sup> We examine their socio-economic and the political backgrounds and their activities including their role

---

<sup>90</sup> The exception is DMK (see sub-section "The Thesis").

and status perceptions. Judging by their poor perception of assembly activity, these chapters highlight the poor institutional role that MLAs appear to have been provided with in the current political structure with reference to calling the Executive to account. On several important issues the responses of the MLAs are counter-intuitive. These chapters also underline some unexpected points of difference between the MLAs of the five different states and five different parties included in our study.

Chapter ten illustrates the working of the most important legislative committee, the Public Accounts Committee, in each of the legislatures included in our study. The data point to a near-total ineffectiveness of this committee. We posit that there is a general lack of interest in the affairs of the committee because its organization is poorly conceived, and because there is no effective avenue and no incentive for following up on the implementation of its recommendations.

Chapters eleven to seventeen analyse the views of MLAs on India's national problems ranging from over-population and poverty to Centre-state relations and National Integration. This exercise again highlights some remarkable differences in the characteristics displayed by India's provincial legislators by state and party.

Chapter eighteen presents the conclusion summarizing the findings. We argue that despite different orientations between states, the MLAs as ruling elites in each state appear to be committed to the idea of a strong 'Indian State'. Herein might lie India's potential strength for creating strong foundations for its long-term political stability.

## II. INDIA'S PROVINCIAL LEGISLATORS: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Legislatures exist in all democratic political systems, and often in non-democratic ones. But in their main functions and in relative effectiveness they are considerably diverse.<sup>1</sup> Nowhere is this diversity more pronounced than in India where it endures not only between National Parliament and state Assemblies but even between different state Assemblies (see Chapter I). In any case India is *sui generis* rendering any comparison with others illogical.<sup>2</sup> This is why generalizations about state legislatures in India, based on existing typologies, can be hazardous.

### A BRIEF PERSPECTIVE ON LEGISLATURES

Most research on legislatures has been directed at the United States and, to a lesser extent, Europe. During the 1970s a wider comparative perspective emerged which saw the scope of this research expanding to include developing countries.<sup>3</sup> This resulted in a large body of literature on the subject.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Philip Laundy, *Parliament in the Modern World* (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing, 1989)

<sup>2</sup> A federal USA is less than one-third in population, linguistically homogeneous, and very prosperous; Canada is huge in land area but very small in population, with only Quebec as a relative problem; and People's Republic of China, the only comparison in size and population, is not a competitive democracy and is far more homogeneous linguistically and ethnically.

<sup>3</sup> An impetus was provided by the launching respectively of the publications of the Consortium for Comparative Legislative Studies organised by scholars at Duke University, the University of Hawaii, the University of Iowa, and the State University of New York at Albany in 1975, and the Legislative Studies Quarterly by the Comparative Legislative Research Center, University of Iowa, in 1976.

<sup>4</sup> Among others, see publications of the Consortium for Comparative Legislative Studies. These include work by Allan Kornberg, Lloyd Musolf, Michael Mezey, Alfred Eldridge, G R Boynton, Roger Davidson, Gerhard Loewenberg, Juan Linz, Robert Packenham, John D. Lees and others.

As the role of governments has expanded, legislatures, often thought of as “rubber-stamp institutions”, have also gained in importance.<sup>5</sup> This is manifest in the fact that in Western democracies several reforms were specifically directed at making legislatures more effective. Norman Ornstein comments on the US Congress,<sup>6</sup>

the U.S. Congress, in the 1970s, decentralised power and perquisites to rank and file backbench members; expanded resources, particularly staffs and information processing equipment, to all legislators and committees; and opened proceedings and actions to outside interests, the public and the mass media.

Other Western legislatures saw similar trends of reform. Committee systems expanded and staff resources were increased. The backbench legislator began to demand attention and became an influence on policy making. Ornstein further quotes from the *Economist*, to emphasise the point:<sup>7</sup>

After the events of the past few months, nobody will be disposed any longer to write off the British House of Commons as a moribund institution. In March, a report by the treasury and civil service select committee did much to undermine the credibility of the Thatcher Government’s monetary policy; in May, a threatened backbench revolt forced ministers to cut by half an increase in the duty on diesel fuel.

In some cases, legislatures have gained in importance because of the role they play in the formation and stability of governments and “..in others, where legislative institutions may not be especially vital, they are important by virtue of their continued existence”.<sup>8</sup> Even in societies which faced military coups or dictators, legislative institutions were maintained, or even newly created, to provide a semblance of legitimacy to the regime.

---

<sup>5</sup> Jean Blondel, *Comparative Legislatures* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973)

<sup>6</sup> Norman J Ornstein, in Norman J Ornstein (ed.), *The Role of the Legislature in Western Democracies* (Washington, DC: AEI, 1981) pp xv.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid* p. xvii

<sup>8</sup> Richard Sisson, ‘Comparative Legislative Institutionalization: A theoretical exploration’ in Allan Kornberg (Ed.) *Legislatures in Comparative Perspective* (New York: David McKay, 1973) p. 18

## Categories of Legislatures

One general way of categorising legislatures in democratic political regimes is Nelson Polsby's classification of *Transformative Legislatures* and *Parliamentary Arenas*.<sup>9</sup> Transformative legislatures in his terms are true law-making (as opposed to law-passing) bodies; they enjoy substantial independence from the executive in pursuing their activities. The Arena type legislatures, on the other hand, primarily serve as a forum for debate and for the representation of different social groups. Their capacity for independent action is limited and they certainly lack an independent law-making ability. The USA exemplifies transformative legislatures and the British House of Commons fairly represents the Arena type legislature. We find that parliaments and assemblies fashioned on the Westminster style are inherently much closer to the Arena end of the spectrum. The principal daily work of the Arena parliament is debate and, to varying degrees of effectiveness, retrospective accountability of the executive. The Transformative Congress, on the other hand, engages first and foremost in representation and action, especially law-making.

Clearly, this broad categorization is helpful but too general. Under this classification the British House of Commons, the Indian Lok Sabha, and the state Assemblies in India are all Parliamentary Arenas. However, in practice, all three are extremely different from each other in their functioning and effectiveness.

---

<sup>9</sup> Nelson Polsby, 'Legislatures' in Fred A Greenstein and Nelson W Polsby (Eds.), *Handbook of Political Science* Vol 5 (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975) pp 257-319

Michael Mezey, on the other hand, offers a more complex five-way classification:<sup>10</sup>

**Active:** The U.S. Congress is his example of an active legislature because of its ability to reject, amend, ignore or even replace policy proposals initiated by either the executive or its own members.

**Reactive:** The British House of Commons exemplifies this category because it does not have the *effective* power to defeat major government proposals since this is interpreted as a defeat for the government leading to dissolution of the House. But the House sets certain parameters which are not normally violated by the government. Except for private members' bills, all legislation and policy is initiated by the executive and the legislature only reacts to it.

His remaining three categories *vulnerable*, *marginal*, and *minimal*, are all associated with strong, even dictatorial, executives and to that extent do not really belong to open democratic systems.<sup>11</sup> Active and Reactive legislatures seem to correspond respectively to the Transformative and Arena categories of Polsby.

Following Mezey's classification, and basing himself on the experience of the British Commons, Philip Norton offered a threefold classification of legislatures linked to their capacity for *policy-making* (the U.S. Congress), *policy-influencing* Norton

---

<sup>10</sup> Michael Mezey, *Comparative Legislatures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979) pp 37-43

<sup>11</sup> His example for *Vulnerable* is the Congress of the Philippines. This is a Congress which commonly represents traditional local elites and is out of touch with the masses. It can therefore be ignored, even suspended as done by President Marcos in 1972. His example of *Marginal* is the National Assembly of Pakistan, designed to be subordinate to the President with no real power to reject government proposals. Presidential ordinances promulgated while the legislature was not in session are routinely approved later. Finally, his example of *Minimal* is the erstwhile Supreme Soviet which could neither reject nor amend policy proposals brought to it by the government.

argues that the Commons does not fit into Mezey's 'Reactive' category), and third, when they have *little or no influence on policy*.<sup>12</sup>

The problem with these categories is again the fact that they are too general. Almost all state Assemblies in our sample would fit into the last category of 'little or no influence on policy', and yet they are all different.

Working independently, Weinbaum<sup>13</sup> categorised legislatures into five classes: *the coordinate* (Type I), these usually had a partisan majority and generally well established norms of mutual consultation with the executive; *the subordinate* (Type II), these existed in the shadow of a disciplined majority party in the House; *the submissive* (Type III), these were what their name suggests and they were unable to set any limits or control on executive discretion; *the indeterminate* (Type IV), these legislatures were dominated by factionalism or multipartyism with unstable relationship with the executive; and, *the competitive-dominant* (Type V), these legislatures did not burden their legislators by party or ideology commitments, thereby freely permitting a pursuance of local, narrow-constituent and personal goals.

The important point underlying Weinbaum's classification is that legislatures can only be evaluated relative to political institutions which exist concurrently in the society. But this also means that, conceptually, the same legislature could fall into different classifications at different times.

---

<sup>12</sup> Peter Norton (Ed.), *Legislatures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) pp 177-180

<sup>13</sup> Marvin G Weinbaum, 'Classification and Change in Legislative Systems: With particular application to Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan' in Boynton and Kim (Eds.), *Legislative Systems in Developing Countries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1975) p. 35

While this seems a fluid classification because it rests on the process of a legislature's relationship with the executive and not on its own status under the constitution of the state, it recognises the importance of political parties and political culture in determining the role of legislatures. It thereby introduces a certain amount of realism into the classification, certainly where developing countries are concerned. Our interviews with MLAs indicated that political parties had a strong control over legislators and their activities inside the House (See Chapter VII).

Although we could define some of our state legislatures in line with the Weinbaum categorization - Haryana as Type IV, West Bengal as Type III, Tamilnadu under DMK rule as Type II, Maharashtra, not quite but close to Type I, and Uttar Pradesh under BJP rule somewhere between Type III and Type IV - it really is difficult to put Indian state legislatures in such a typology. The same may apply to other legislatures as seen in the comments of Anthony King:<sup>14</sup>

Legislatures are not monolithic entities any more than executives or interest groups are; they are made up of parties and factions, of ideological tendencies, of interest group representatives, and of individuals with all kinds of axes to grind and career considerations to keep in mind.

Although these comments were made in relation to Western democracies, they also represent quite accurately the way legislatures work in the Indian States. This is what makes it difficult to categorise them in line with established institutional conceptualizations.

---

<sup>14</sup> Anthony King, 'How to Strengthen Legislatures - Assuming that we want to' in Norman J Ornstein (Ed.), *The Role of the Legislature in Western Democracies* (Washington, DC: AEI, 1981) p. 78



## Functions of Legislatures

In legislative literature, while there is a clear perception that legislatures perform a variety of functions, there is only a broad understanding, not a consensus, on their general functions. Certainly there is no agreement on their 'principal' functions.

Robert Packenham, in relation to the Brazilian congress proposes the following categories:<sup>15</sup>

- 1) ***Legitimation Function:*** This is split further into three types, a) *Legitimation as a latent function* - legislatures may perform this function quite unconsciously, simply by meeting regularly and creating a perception of a check on the government; b) *Legitimation as a manifest function* - this function is performed consciously by according formal approval to government proposals; and c) *Safety-valve or Tension release function* - legislatures by being a place for debate and by being widely reported in the media, become centres of tension release when the government is unwilling or unable to give everyone what they want.
- 2) ***Recruitment, Socialization, and Training functions:*** this function is a consequence of the existence of and deliberations of the legislature through which politicians are trained for other roles in the political system.
- 3) ***Decisional or Influence function*** - this is split further into five types: a) *the law-making function* - including law influencing or modifying, b) *the exit function* - this is explained in terms of when the elite may reach an impasse and then turn to the legislature to provide a way out. It is therefore decision-making but under extraordinary circumstances, c) *the interest articulation function* - relates to the expression of public opinion through assembly

---

<sup>15</sup> Robert A Packenham, 'Legislatures and Political Development' in A Kornberg and L Musolf (Eds.), *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective*, (Duke University Press, 1970) pp 521-37

debates, d) *the conflict resolution function* - through which conflicting interests are negotiated and settlements obtained, and e) *the administrative oversight and patronage function* - through which the legislature exercises some check on the government as well as exerts influence through its control on financial resources.

Packenharn rightly argues that while these were the functions of the Brazilian Congress in the order of importance as he saw it, not only could these vary in strength and importance from legislature to legislature, but there could be other functions that each legislature could be performing in relation to the political system in which it existed. In saying so, he leans toward Weinbaum.

Michael Mezey lists the following functions of legislatures:<sup>16</sup>

- 1) ***Policy-making activities:*** He includes active policy making, policy approvals with or without modification, deliberation leading to some influence on policy-making, legislative oversight, and keeping the activities of the executive and administration in public view. Mezey argues that these activities may be high or low in a particular system, but that they generally exist in most legislatures;
- 2) ***Representational Activities:*** Included here are interest articulation, which really means giving voice to the people and serving as intermediary between citizens and government departments. In other words 'errand-running' This is perceived to be a universal function of legislators.
- 3) ***System-Maintenance Activities:*** These help in the stability and survival of the political system and therefore include recruitment and socialization, conflict management, integration of the political system as well as of national elites,

---

<sup>16</sup> *Comparative Legislatures, op. cit.*, pp 7-20

creation and support of the government, legitimizing the actions of the regime, and Pakenham's function as a safety valve for letting off steam.

Clearly, the systemic functions of legislatures extend far beyond classical law-making actions. There is no universally most important function of legislatures, and they indeed perform different functions not only in different political systems but even within the same political system at different times, depending on the concurrent characteristics of the leadership as well as party discipline and party majority.

The most commonly discussed functions of legislatures are: make and/or pass laws, hold debates, help keep the activities of the executive in public view, appropriate funds, articulate public or constituency interest, manage conflict, help integration, provide legitimation, provide a safety-valve for societal and political pressures, oversee administration, initiate developmental goals, recruitment and system maintenance.

A major function of legislatures is to be a communication channel between the people and government, thus helping inject demands into the decision-making process. At the same time, in many systems of the world, including some in the developed world, we can now talk of cabinet governments in control of the majority of legislators, and in doing so we are talking of party-oriented governments rather than legislature-oriented governments.<sup>17</sup> We shall later see that in the case of Indian state legislatures this proposition is much closer to their real character.

---

<sup>17</sup> Samuel H Beer, 'The British Legislature and the Problem of Mobilizing Consent' in Philip Norton (Ed.) *Legislatures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) p. 64

## LEGISLATORS

Legislators are individual political actors, involved in much activity both inside and outside the legislature. Morris-Jones differentiates their two faces by referring to one as “member *in* the assembly”, and to the other as “member *of* the assembly”.<sup>18</sup> The latter face is multi-dimensional and linked to the legislators’ group and constituency imperatives, party and political cultures, as well as private interests and career considerations. With regard to developing societies, a review of the literature indicates that it is also their more important role.<sup>19</sup>

The role of legislators has been variously described. James David Barber, in his study of motivations for legislative service in Connecticut, uses the self-explanatory categories of *lawmakers*, *reluctants*, *spectators*, and *advertisers*.<sup>20</sup> Oliver H. Woshinsky defines three types of French Deputies based on their motivation: *mission participants*, concerned principally with ideology and seeking to serve a cause; *program participants*, interested in gaining higher positions, manipulating their environment, solving problems in it, and working on policies which influence social reality; *obligation participants*, concerned with the moral aspects of politics and morally correct behaviour; and, *status participants*, concerned with seeking social

---

<sup>18</sup> W H Morris-Jones, ‘Editor’s Introduction: The parliamentary Politician in Asia’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, I, 3, August 1976, p. 287

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Chong Lim Kim et al. (Eds.), *The Legislative Connection: The Politics of Representation in Kenya, Korea, and Turkey* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1984); Gerhard Loewenberg & Samuel C Patterson, *Comparing Legislatures* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1979); Michael Mezey, ‘Third World Legislatures’ in Gerhard Loewenberg et al. (Eds.), *Handbook of Legislative Research* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985)

<sup>20</sup> James David Barber, *The Lawmakers: Recruitment and Adaptation to Legislative Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965). He based his classification on the legislators’ activity in the legislature and on their willingness to continue service in it. The active legislators, if they were willing to continue, were classified *Lawmakers*, if unwilling, *Advertisers*. The inactive legislators if willing were classified *Spectators* and, if unwilling, *Reluctants*.

prestige and enhancing their status.<sup>21</sup> Allan Kornberg and William Mishler distinguish three types of Canadian MPs: *insiders*, the parliamentary professionals who dominate debate; *gadflies*, who introduce most of the private bills; and *committee activists*, who keep busy with committee work but appear to be amateurs.<sup>22</sup>

However, much of the recent work on legislators is based on the influential study by a team consisting of John Wahlke, Heinz Eulau, William Buchanan and LeRoy Ferguson in four particular US states, California, New Jersey, Ohio and Tennessee.<sup>23</sup> Although their work focused on the perceptions and behaviour of the members of these four state legislatures, their main generalizations had a much wider application. The following categorization of legislative roles was offered by Wahlke et al.:

**Purposive Roles:** The Legislator as a Decision Maker:

**Representational Roles:** The Legislator as a Representative:

**Areal Roles:** The Legislator and his District:

**Pressure Group Roles:** The Legislator and the Interests:

**Party Roles:** The Legislator and his Party.

With regard to the first category, **Purposive Roles**, a typology of the role orientations of the legislators was developed based on the question: "*How would you describe the job of being a legislator - what are the most important things you should do*

---

<sup>21</sup> Oliver H Woshinsky, *The French Deputy: Incentives and Behavior in the National Assembly* (Lexington, MA: D.C.Heath & Co., 1973)

<sup>22</sup> A Kornberg and W Mishler, *Influence in Parliament: Canada* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1976)

<sup>23</sup> John C Wahlke, Heinz Eulau, William Buchanan, and LeRoy Ferguson, *The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior* (New York: John Wiley, 1962)

here?"<sup>24</sup> Analysing the response pattern, the team formulated the following five categories:

**The Ritualist:** the workhorse of the legislature immersing himself in the procedural and routine work of the House;

**The Tribune:** the advocate and defender of popular demands viewing himself as a representative of the people in a direct and immediate sense;

**The Inventor:** sensitive to public issues and exploring potential solutions;

**The Broker:** as a disinterested actor, balances conflicting interests, be they between constituents and state, group versus group, or due to general demands on the system;

**The Opportunist:** meets the bare minimum required of him and uses his office for furthering his own interests.

This typology has been followed and further developed by other scholars. Roger Davidson, in analysing Congressmen, uses these categories but notes that even though the main requirement is only that the Tribune perceive himself as the spokesman for the people, the term *Tribune* is "extremely inclusive".<sup>25</sup> Peter Gerlich generally follows the purposive roles sketched by Wahlke et al., but also specifies *administrators* and *controllers* related to work in the legislature, and *errand boy* and *communication* roles, both directly related to constituents.<sup>26</sup> Two other purposive legislative roles that are generally identified are *social work*, and *pork-barrel activities* on behalf of the constituency.

---

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249

<sup>25</sup> Roger Davidson, *The Role of the Congressman* (New York: Pegasus, 1969) pp.79-97

<sup>26</sup> Peter Gerlich, 'Orientations to Decision-Making in the Vienna City Council' in Samuel C Patterson and John C Wahlke, *Comparative Legislative Behavior: Frontiers of Research* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972)

**Representational Roles** appear to have one of their early classifications in the oft quoted speech of Edmund Burke to the electors of Bristol in 1774:<sup>27</sup>

Certainly gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents...

But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgement, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, or to any man, or to any set of men living.

Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

The Burkean view was formulated, of course, during a period when the role of the state was limited. Political parties were generally loose collections of notables; modern conceptions of party discipline and responsible party governments were almost entirely absent.<sup>28</sup>

This view of the legislator was clearly based on two strong, though questionable, propositions: the elite distrust of people's ability to take the right decisions, and conversely the confidence not only in the ability of the few 'gifted' representatives but also an assumption that these representatives would be unquestionably and singularly interested in the welfare of the voters and the nation as a whole.

Following Burke, Wahlke et al. formulated a three-fold typology of **representational roles**,<sup>29</sup>

**Trustee:** This is stated in Burkean terms in so far as the trustee sees himself as a free agent to do what he considers 'right';

---

<sup>27</sup> Edmund Burke, 'Speech to the Electors of Bristol' in *Speeches and Letters on American Affairs* (London: Everyman edition, 1961, pp. 72-74)

<sup>28</sup> Vernon Bogdanor (Ed.), *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituents in Western Democracies* (Aldershot, Hants: Gower Publishing, 1985) pp. 3-4

<sup>29</sup> Wahlke et al., op. cit., ch. 12

**Delegate:** This is stated as the typically constituency bound legislator. He follows what the 'represented' want him to do; and,

**Politico:** He mixes elements of delegate and the trustee conceptions. Legislators often do not know what the wishes of their constituents are, and often their constituents do not have sharply defined opinions. So, many legislators mix elements of delegate and the trustee functions. A politico therefore fits his style of representation to the political circumstances.

This typology has been used in a large number of studies on legislative roles and behaviour. Roger Davidson links the role of the legislators to the primary function of the political system - planning and implementing the goals of the larger society. The underlying argument, on the demand side, is that the society has a multiplicity of goals. The polity must, therefore, provide mechanisms for setting priorities among the alternative goals. On the implementation side, a polity needs to mobilise resources or facilities required for the goals selected. As resources are finite, conflict is inevitable. In this situation, "bargaining relationships emerge". Davidson argues that such bargaining is carried out by the members of the United States House of Representatives in keeping with their roles as Trustees, Delegates, and Politicos.<sup>30</sup>

Malcolm Jewell, quoting data from nine state Metropolitan Counties (USA), demonstrates that the proportion of trustee, politico, and delegate vary considerably between states depending on their orientations.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Roger Davidson, *The Role of the Congressman* (New York: Pegasus, 1969) pp. 110-142

<sup>31</sup> Malcolm Jewell, 'Attitudinal Determinants of Legislative Behavior: The Utility of Role Analysis' in Allan Kornberg and Lloyd Musolf (Eds.), *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970). He found that the "moderate liberals" tended to be *trustees*, while the "middle of the road" were more inclined to be *delegates*. pp. 460-500



Allan Kornberg uses the same typology for Canadian legislators but describes the delegates as *delegate-servants*, because the legislators felt that they not only had to consult and seek advice from their constituents but also had to perform services for them.<sup>32</sup> Michael Mezey uses the same typology in his comparison of representative role perceptions among thirteen legislatures from around the world.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the extensive use of this typology we find that it is inadequate for conceptualizing Indian MLAs. Our interview data suggests that most MLAs give priority to their party and constituency roles. The latter is further qualified to lean towards 'errand running' rather than constituency developmental activities. Obviously, almost all legislators carry some of the traits of the Wahlke typology, but it is impossible to cast MLAs into any one of those roles (see Chapter VII).

As regards **Areal Roles**, **Pressure Group**, and **Party roles** the debate seems to be confused. Relating to the first, Wahlke et al. found inconclusive evidence of whether the legislators considered themselves as representatives of their respective districts or of the entire state.<sup>34</sup> In any case this territorial focus becomes even more complicated when, for example in India, a member of Parliament may consider himself a representative of not only a territorial district within a state but of the state itself and also of the nation.

---

<sup>32</sup> Allan Kornberg, 'Parliament in Canadian Society' in A Kornberg and Lloyd Musolf (Eds.), *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970) p. 93

<sup>33</sup> Michael Mezey, *Comparative Legislatures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979). He compared USA (House of Representatives), American State Legislatures, Japan (House of Representatives), Japan Provincial Assemblies, Canada, Indian State legislature (Uttar Pradesh), Belgium, Switzerland, Turkey, Columbia, Korea, and Kenya. He relates available information on the above to his legislatures typology of Active, Reactive... pp. 170-75

<sup>34</sup> Wahlke et al., *The Legislative System..* op. cit., pp. 287-310

As regards the second, Wahlke et al. found that interest group accommodation was not universally accepted as their function by legislators.<sup>35</sup> Regarding party roles, Wahlke et al. did not find any conclusive trends from their survey as they found that most legislators were not enthusiastic about their role as partisan party members.<sup>36</sup>

**Party Roles** and **Areal Roles** present a point of departure for many subsequent studies. Bogdanor addresses the predominant role which political parties play in contemporary political arrangements. The legislator represents both his constituency and his party. In general, Bogdanor argues, it is the party mandate that prevails.

He identifies four main roles: *representing a constituency* - this could be territorial or a non-geographic entity such as party or an interest group. In this representational role the legislator is also an intermediary between the public and the bureaucracy and he is vitally concerned with the promotion of constituency interests. The second and the dominant role for most parliamentarians in Bogdanor's terms is that of *partisan*, i.e., to promote certain partisan or ideological aims held by his party. In this case the legislator sees himself, not so much as representative of a constituency, but as representative of a party point of view. His legislative decisions are thus determined fundamentally by party interests. The third role is that of a *protector of interests* - a legislator may seek to protect interests of many different kinds pertaining to the interests of a social or economic class, or of a religious, linguistic or ethnic group.

---

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 311-342

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* Ch. 15. Wahlke et al. designed an appraisal scale of +1.0 to -1.0 to distinguish between wholly party-men and wholly independent. They did not get a clear response that party role was significant among their legislators.

Finally a legislator may be concerned mainly with *policy* matters - he may be, as in the classical model of parliamentary government, a genuine legislator.<sup>37</sup>

In reviewing the representative roles of legislators in the British context, S.E.Finer sees representation theory as having moved from one concerning localities or territorial constituencies, to one concerning national mandates.<sup>38</sup> He argues that the majority i.e., a single party or a coalition of parties that wins on its specific programme, is the real representative and that the members of this majority have moved from active and creative participation in law-making to a general diffused support for governmental activities.

There is one more aspect of this change. As the governments have grown, the individual has less direct access to many of its faces. This has resulted in a new role for the legislator - a nursemaid or an 'errand boy' for his/her constituents. But from the supply side too, with elections never too far on the horizon, the incentive to perform favours for constituents is high for legislators everywhere.<sup>39</sup> In India, at state level, we find that the legislators are inundated with constituents' problems, mostly personal (See Chapter V).

---

<sup>37</sup> Vernon Bogdanor (Ed.), *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituents in Western Democracies* (Aldershot, Hants: Gower Publishing, 1985) p. 5-6

<sup>38</sup> S.E.Finer, 'The contemporary Context of Representation' in Vernon Bogdanor (Ed.), *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituents in Western Democracies* (Aldershot, Hants: Gower Publishing, 1985) pp. 286-292

<sup>39</sup> Gerhard Loewenberg and Samuel C Patterson, *Comparing Legislatures* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1979). They note that American Congressmen, with their large personal staffs, are not only well equipped to perform such services, they solicit them by contacting their constituents through newsletters, mass mailings, and radio broadcasts to make them aware of available services. European legislators may lack such office facilities to run constituents' errands on the American scale, but they maintain contact with interested constituents on a regular basis. (p. 187)

Legislatures, by definition, are representative institutions, whose members are elected to serve not only the “national” interest, but also the interests of sub-national, territorial, or specific group constituencies. Legislatures may make decisions collectively, but the positions taken by individual legislators, especially in developing countries, are invariably perceived in terms of their impact on the constituents that they represent. The extent depends on how far the citizen has access to alternative remedies vis-a-vis the bureaucracy. If the average constituent does not have access to decision-makers, he turns to his legislator who in popular perception has this access.

In fact it is due to these two factors, the large presence of party in the modern political arenas and the significance of constituency services, that the conceptualization of legislators as delegates, trustees or politicians begins to disintegrate. Peter Gerlich’s Vienna study distinguished two broad areas of legislative role orientations: those that he calls *representational*, concerned with more general attitudes of the legislator toward his/her tasks and positions as a representative, and those that are termed *instrumental*, directed toward more specific and concrete tasks and activities that the councillor feels obliged to perform.<sup>40</sup> These latter activities are always in the shadow of the party. “A legislator nominated, elected, and acting within the organizational framework of his party has first of all to represent the interests of his party and of those parts of the electorate that support it.”<sup>41</sup> He therefore talks of just two categories, *Partymen*, who mainly represent the narrow interests of

---

<sup>40</sup> Peter Gerlich, ‘Orientations to Decision-Making in the Vienna City Council’ in Samuel C Patterson and John C Wahlke (Eds.) *Comparative Legislative Behavior: Frontiers of Research* (New York: John Wiley, 1972) pp. 87-106

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* p.92

the party, and *Generalists*, who consider in addition the interests of non-party groups and the state.

Several others have made a reference to the party focus of the legislators but due to the fact that in the United States, where most of the legislative research has been concentrated, the hold of the party over individual legislator is not as strong as it is in several of the West European or developing countries, this aspect has not been given the weight it carries in systems other than the USA.<sup>42</sup>

### **Representation in Developing Countries**

In less developed countries, the literature points mainly towards two legislative role orientations: territorial constituency, and party loyalty. From our own study in the five state legislatures, we discern the same orientations.

The elected representative, in classical theory, is an intermediary between his electoral constituency and the government. His/her election occurs within a defined locality or from a specific group, but as a result of this election he comes into a position of contact with the administration and the executive. He is thus well placed to express to the government the views and desires of his constituents; conversely, he is also in a position to express to the electorate the policies and purposes of the central government. As an intermediary, therefore he is a two-way communicator. His constituency role may overwhelmingly become running errands for constituents,

---

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Roger Davidson, *The Role of the Congressman*, op.cit. Davidson recognises the claims political parties make upon the loyalty of the legislator. He created five gradations of pro-party attitudes based on the response: agree, tend to agree, undecided, tend to disagree, and disagree, to a set of questions based on which he classifies legislators as Superloyalists, Loyalists, Neutral, and Maverick, in that order, based on their pro-party attitude. pp. 143-175.

but sometimes a legislator is able to contribute to the process of the development in his area.

One of the strongest themes that emerges from studies of legislatures in developing countries is the importance that a majority of legislators attach to personal constituency service. The people, in the words of F G Bailey,<sup>43</sup>

See their MLAs not as a legislator but as THEIR representative who will intercede for them with the Administration. This is meant quite literally. The MLA is an effective broker, who can get a man out of trouble or win a favour for him, or so manipulate matters that the benefits of the welfare state are diverted away from others towards his own people.”

Sisson and Shrader, show that the MLAs in Rajasthan look at their constituencies as their main point of reference. Generally the members are deeply linked to their constituencies they represent not only through electoral representation but through close familial, ancestral and social ties.<sup>44</sup> A large proportion of MLAs perceive their primary function to be looking after constituency interests in their capacity as its representative. Sisson also discovered that this constituency role tended to be more salient for the more recent generations of legislators than for the older ones; and it was more salient for legislators from rural than from urban constituencies.

In Kenya, another developing country, 82% of legislators interviewed in 1974 reported that they were mainly concerned with service to the constituency - obtaining resources and projects for their constituents. Interviews with constituents revealed that both representatives and represented shared the expectation that legislators should

---

<sup>43</sup> F G Bailey, *Traditional Society and Representation: a case study of Orissa*, quoted in Mezey, *Comparative Legislatures* op. cit., p. 15

<sup>44</sup> Richard Sisson and Lawrence Shrader, 'Social Representation and Political Integration in an Indian State: the Legislative Dimension' in Albert F Eldridge (Ed.) *Legislatures in Plural Societies*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1977) p. 89

serve as errand-boys.<sup>45</sup> Marvin Weinbaum, researching legislators in Afghanistan, also reaffirms that their primary function is constituent-related.<sup>46</sup>

In developing countries, citizens have few alternatives to seeking help from their representative in dealing with the administration. On the other hand, legislators are aware that their re-election might depend on satisfying their constituents. Understandably, legislators willingly spend a considerable proportion of their time receiving visits from their constituents and intervening with the administration on their behalf.

The other aspect of the territorial and constituency representation is *Pork-barrel activities*. These are a result of the relationship between a constituency as a whole and its legislator. A community expects that its representative will provide it with a favourable share of the public resources. From the supply side, the legislator, because of his position and the role expectations ascribed to his job by his constituents, is often able to contribute to the development of his area in a way that bureaucracy and party officials cannot. We found an illustration of this culture in the state of Tamilnadu. Most of the MLAs whom we interviewed had printed large posters listing all development projects in their constituency. The underlying message to their

---

<sup>45</sup> Gerhard Loewenberg and Samuel C Patterson, *Comparing Legislatures* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1979) p. 181

<sup>46</sup> Marvin G Weinbaum, 'The Legislator As Intermediary: Integration of the Center and Periphery in Afghanistan' in Albert F Eldridge (Ed.), *Legislatures in Plural Societies: The Search for Cohesion in National Development* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1977). He argues that the legislator is looked upon as the most useful man for the people, and he is expected to use his offices and contacts for assistance with their problems. The legislator also charges for his services when he helps a constituent to get a lucrative license or some other monetary or personal gain. Weinbaum introduces an interesting category of *ideologues* for the two Marxists and the eight to ten mullahs and religious zealots he found in the Afghanistan *Shura* (assembly). He comments that most of the ideologues participate energetically in the debates, and their rhetoric is aimed at people outside the *Shura*. However, he also found that their constituents sometimes criticised them for not looking after their constituents' interests in the way they are expected to. (pp. 110-14)

constituents was that they (the MLAs) had laboured to get these projects for their constituency.

The constituency-delegate role is further enhanced in some societies by the existence of sponsorship, by interest groups or commercial organisations, for the legislators in their election process. The effect of this recruitment sponsorship is suggested in Chong L Kim and B Woo's study in Korea.<sup>47</sup> Sponsorship was related to the role behaviour of concerned legislators. Those legislators who were sponsored were more likely to take on delegate roles than those who were not. Further light is shed on sponsorship in the studies of Allan E Goodman on South Vietnam<sup>48</sup> and Mezey on Thailand<sup>49</sup>. In both countries the legislator's primary task is to serve as a channel for distributing governmental patronage, licences and other factors to his sponsors and constituency. If the legislator nurtures his constituency, he remains in office; if he fails to do that, he is displaced.

One more dimension in developing countries is that their constituents expect them to help even with personal issues and problems. Mezey notes,<sup>50</sup>

.. because in many non-western cultures the political realm is not as well differentiated from the non-political... third world legislators have had to deal with requests that their western counterparts seldom confront. Thus, in Bangladesh, MPs were asked to mediate private disputes among their constituents. In India, MPs were regularly asked to lend or give money to constituents in need. In Thailand, legislators reported that they were asked to act as go-betweens in arranging marriages. While in Singapore, some MPs indicated that they had been asked to find run-away spouses.

---

<sup>47</sup> Chong Lim Kim and Byung-Kyu Woo, 'Political Representation in the Korean National Assembly' in Boynton and Kim (Eds.) *Legislative Systems in Developing Countries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1975)

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid* pp. 181-206

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid* pp. 107-142

<sup>50</sup> Michael Mezey, 'Third World Legislatures' in Gerhard Loewenberg, Samuel C Patterson, and Malcolm E Jewell (Eds.), *Handbook of Legislative Research* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985) p. 743



During our interviews, many MLAs, particularly from rural areas, stated that they were often consulted and asked to help for match-making and in resolving family disputes.

The fact that MLAs constantly have to attend to the needs and requests of their constituents is not unique to developing states: legislators in many areas of the world have the same problem. Constituency service was listed as one of the two most important and frequent activities by the American Congressmen.<sup>51</sup> In Rumania, “simply put, to get any service done and done right, one needs to know someone... A Deputy is for many citizens a means of avoiding bureaucratic tangles, and he therefore becomes a disposer of favours..”<sup>52</sup>

In conclusion, we have to remember two overwhelming considerations: first, that party interest, policy and loyalty jointly determine a legislator’s behaviour in most parts of the world excluding the USA, particularly in parliamentary-style legislatures; second, that the constituency related role often receives overwhelming attention from legislators particularly in those countries where, due to constituents’ expectations, their re-election is dependent on their success in this matter. Therefore, while a legislator may designate himself a trustee, delegate or politico, these roles are subordinate to party-policy and constituency interest which he is most of the time obliged to follow.

---

<sup>51</sup> Roger Davidson, *The Role of the Congressman* op. cit.

<sup>52</sup> Daniel N. Nelson, ‘Citizen Participation in Rumania’ quoted in David Olson, *The Legislative Process: A Comparative Approach* (New York: Harpers & Row, 1980) p. 137

## THE INDIAN MLAS

Unlike the MP at national level, the state-level legislator in India is under-researched.<sup>53</sup> More importantly, work done on the subject is remarkably diverse and scattered rendering it inimical to cumulation and to application of consistent concepts and methods. The few scholars who have attempted seriously to study the state MLAs have followed their own individual techniques, resulting in many separate enquiries and approaches in the resultant literature. Thus, while we may know something about the Bihar legislators elected to a certain assembly, we are unlikely to know the same about legislators elected to a subsequent assembly. Any possibility of comparisons with MLAs from another state is remote.

Much attention has been devoted to the social origins of legislators to highlight their changing socio-economic background. This is perhaps the only area where some basis of comparison exists. For example, this cumulative knowledge has resulted in a consensus that the membership of state legislatures has moved toward a higher rural representation.

The entire literature appears to be limited to individual legislatures or sections of it.<sup>54</sup> Most are unpublished theses in Indian universities undertaken by state

---

<sup>53</sup> The Indian National Parliament, the Lok Sabha, received early attention in a detailed study by W H Morris-Jones. See *Parliament in India* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957). Several studies followed examining various aspects of the parliament. Some of these are S P Verma, *Changing Pattern of Parliamentary Leadership in India* (Unpublished thesis, 1965), S L Chopra and D S Chauhan, 'Emerging Patterns of Political Leadership in India' in *Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies* V(IV) 1970 pp. 119-127, Bhawani Singh, *Council of States in India* (Merrut, UP: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1973), Singhvi L M, 'Parliament in Indian Political System' in Allan Kornberg and Lloyd Musolf (Eds.), *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970)

One example of the neglect of research on MLAs is A P Padhi (Ed.), *Indian State Politics: A Case Study of Orissa* (Delhi: B R Publishing, 1985). It carries twenty-five articles, of which none relates to the legislators. It is almost as though in the study of state politics the MLAs are irrelevant.

<sup>54</sup> There are studies which within a single House, limit their scope to legislators in a particular group on the basis of gender, caste or religion (See Chapter I).

domiciled scholars working independently of one another. Their chief concerns appear limited to understanding their own particular state legislature and its occupants. We did not come across even one study that attempted to go beyond the borders of an individual state. Therefore, not only is there a gap in researching MLAs along an inter-state comparative structure, but the concept does not seem to exist in India.

This scholarly disinterest with state legislatures presents a paradox. The importance of state-level politics has long been recognised.<sup>55</sup> As John Wood, in a volume on state politics, notes, “significant political change in India occurs first at state level and subsequently shapes national political processes”.<sup>56</sup> Arguably, therefore, an understanding of processes within state legislatures may be a prerequisite to understanding processes in the Lok Sabha. The relevance may be seen in the fact that in the tenth Lok Sabha (1991 ~), 38% of MPs had previously been MLAs.<sup>57</sup> However, scant attention has been paid so far to state legislatures, even though these are central institutions in the political process of the states.<sup>58</sup>

Explicitly or implicitly, there seems to be a consensus that state legislatures are marginal to the law-making process. The MLAs are certainly not spending most of their time in deliberating bills. The literature, therefore, generally concentrates on their other activities, many of which are performed outside the legislature.

---

<sup>55</sup> See Chapter I

<sup>56</sup> John R Wood (Ed.), *State Politics in India: Crisis or Continuity* (Boulder, CO: westview, 1984) p. 2

<sup>57</sup> Computed from Tenth Lok Sabha, *Who's Who 1992* (Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1992)

<sup>58</sup> There are a few exceptions, for example, Richard Sisson and Lawrence L Shrader, ‘Social Representation and Political Integration in an Indian State: The Legislative Dimension’, in Albert Eldridge (Ed.) *Legislatures in Plural Societies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1977); Richard Brown, *Indian State Legislative Behavior: The Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, 1952-1968* Ph.D thesis, American University, 1971.

## Review of the literature

A brief review of the available literature on MLAs provides only limited information on several aspects covered by our thesis. Most studies examine the socio-economic background of the MLAs and some discuss their role orientation. A few explore the views of MLAs on critical national problems.

One of the earliest studies of state legislators in India was done by F G Bailey, who examined the Orissa<sup>59</sup> legislators as early as 1959.<sup>60</sup> His main finding was that the Indian state legislator is primarily an “errand-runner”. He notes that the constituents see their MLA “not as a legislator but as THEIR representative who will intercede for them with the administration”. He reaffirmed this later in a more detailed study.<sup>61</sup>

In another study of Orissa, Mohapatra specifically examined the MLAs’ complaint-handling role. He found that MLAs were mainly known for their ability to play this “ombudsmanic role” and that most of them had accepted this as a legitimate part of their job.<sup>62</sup> Their relationship with the constituents was therefore on a basis of handling personal errands.

---

<sup>59</sup> Orissa is located on the eastern coast of India bordered by West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. It is one of the poor states with a population of 31.5 million in 1991.

<sup>60</sup> F G Bailey, ‘Traditional Society and Representation: A Case Study of Orissa’ in *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, No.1, pp. 121-141, cited in Michael Mezey, *Comparative Legislatures* op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>61</sup> F G Bailey, *Politics and Social Change: Orissa in 1959* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963)

<sup>62</sup> Manindra Kumar Mohapatra, ‘The Ombudsmanic Role of Legislators in an Indian State’ in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, I, 3, August 1976. pp. 295-312

Duncan Forrester studied members of the Madras Legislative Assembly who served between 1962 and 1968.<sup>63</sup> His study was based largely on a series of interviews with Madras (now Tamilnadu) MLAs held between 1964 and 1966. This was a socio-economic study concentrating primarily on the changing social background and educational qualifications of legislators. His main findings were that formal educational qualifications of the legislators were improving in successive assemblies, and that there was a progressively higher rural bias. On their role perceptions he found that the legislators did not “see their primary role as policy-makers, watchdogs over the executive, or law-makers, but as intermediaries with ‘concerned officials’, usually on personal matters concerning individual constituents.”<sup>64</sup>

G Palanithurai, in his study of Tamilnadu MLAs (1984-89), reported that 61 % of the Tamilnadu MLAs had a rural background. Following from this their main occupations were 64 % agriculturists and 16 % lawyers. We see a variance when compared with our study. From our sample of Tamilnadu legislators, only 24 % had a rural residence and only 34 % were agriculturists. On the other hand, 24 % were lawyers. The variance may well be accounted for by the fact that in our sample of the 1989-91 Assembly, DMK were the majority party and they are certainly more urban oriented than the others, mainly AIADMK and Cong.I, who between them accounted for 87 % of Palanithurai’s sample. Similarly, in terms of education, he reported that 38 % were graduates and above.<sup>65</sup> Our sample indicated 71 %. Commenting on their role perceptions, Palanithurai concludes, “coming to core aspects of the role perception,

---

<sup>63</sup> Duncan B. Forrester, ‘State Legislators in Madras’ in *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, March 1969, pp. 36-57.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* p. 39

<sup>65</sup> G Palanithurai, ‘Role Orientations of the Members of VII Legislative Assembly of Tamilnadu’ in *The Indian Journal of Political Science* vol.50, No.2, April-June 1989.

...the legislators have no clear perception about their role and its impact in the legislature".<sup>66</sup>

Dayadhar Jha conducted a study of Bihar<sup>67</sup> legislators who were members of the Assembly during 1967-68. He interviewed two-thirds of the Bihar Assembly (215 out of 318 legislators), examining the socio-economic background of the legislators, their role-perceptions and their views and attitudes on a number of issues. He found that between 1962 and 1969, the number of MLAs whose occupation was 'full-time politics' increased substantially from 7.34% to 41.91%, while the proportion of cultivators in the assembly dropped. In examining their role orientations, he followed the Wahlke typology of Ritualist, Tribune, Inventor, Broker, and Opportunist but appears inconsistent in following the pattern through. His main finding was that most MLAs in Bihar saw themselves in the role of intermediaries who have to intercede on behalf of their constituents to procure them benefits from the administration.<sup>68</sup>

Kamal Kumar Singh, in his study of the Bihar legislature (1977-80) found that only about 31% were graduates and above. In our sample states, the minimum proportion is 60% (Haryana), and overall average is 70%, indicating a wide variance with Bihar of a decade ago.

---

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* p. 134

<sup>67</sup> Bihar, located between Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, is India's second largest state in terms of population (86.3 million). It is poor and caste-ridden and generally perceived to be high in lawlessness. Certainly the state with maximum electoral violence.

<sup>68</sup> Dayadhar Jha, *State Legislature in India: Legislature in the Indian Political System* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1977)

Judging by the number of studies available, the state of Rajasthan<sup>69</sup> appears to have attracted most of the legislative research in India. Shashi Lata Puri interviewed 130 out of 184 members of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly during 1970-71. Her study aimed to provide a profile of the Rajasthan legislators in terms of their socio-economic background, their attitudes and value orientations as well as their role orientations. In comparison to the 42% 'full-time politicians' in Bihar (ref. Jha), she found that 16% of Rajasthan MLAs in 1971 had no other occupation except being in 'full-time politics'. Of interest to our study is her attempt to examine legislators' attitudes to some national problems. She noted that MLAs perceived unemployment as the gravest problem for the country.<sup>70</sup> Our interviews with legislators from five states give us the same information (see Ch.XI).

In pursuing the role perception of MLAs, she found that their most favoured response was built around 'support to party policies'.<sup>71</sup> Puri observed that MLAs seemed to have a "clear and consistent perception of their roles," which was predominantly developmental. However, she does not tell us whether, in their own perception, MLAs are actually able to perform this function.<sup>72</sup> Iqbal Narain, echoing the same viewpoint, found from his study of Rajasthan MLAs (1970-71) that they perceived themselves in a predominantly developmental role on behalf of their constituency.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> Rajasthan is part of the Hindi heartland. A large state bordering with Pakistan. It is the second largest state in land area but a large part is a desert. Its population is 43.88 million.

<sup>70</sup> Shashi Lata Puri, *Legislative Elite in an Indian State: A Case Study of Rajasthan* (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1978)

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* p. 243

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* p. 267

<sup>73</sup> Iqbal Narain and Shashi Lata Puri, 'Legislators in an Indian State: A Study of Role Images and the Pattern of Constituency Linkages' in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* I, 3, August 1976. pp. 315-329

R C Swaranker is another scholar who studied the Rajasthan legislature.<sup>74</sup> He argues that the 'Question Hour' in the assembly was valuable for the MLAs. He found it "a great safety-valve and a safeguard against abuses";<sup>75</sup> but he himself appears to put a question mark on the argument when he adds that almost two-thirds of MLAs do not make use of their right to put questions. Our own findings are that the MLAs are generally not happy with the quality of answers from the ruling benches (see Ch. VI).

Sunanda Arya also examines the Rajasthan legislature.<sup>76</sup> Her conclusions are quite contrary to our findings. She found that almost three-quarters of Rajasthan legislators felt that they were quite effective in moving the assembly on any matter of their concern. She also found an equal proportion who felt that their work in committees was good and in line with their own positive expectations. We did not cover Rajasthan, but the findings from our five legislatures differ from hers on both these counts.

A K Gupta interviewed 45% of Punjab<sup>77</sup> legislators during 1985 for his study of their socio-economic background.<sup>78</sup> His two important findings were that legislators with a rural background had declined from 79.5% in 1980 to 52% in 1985, and that persons coming from families with insignificant levels of educational achievements were more likely to join politics than those belonging to families with a high level of

---

<sup>74</sup> R C Swaranker, *Political Elite: A Sociological Study of Legislators in Rajasthan* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1988)

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* p. 157

<sup>76</sup> Sunanda Arya, *Legitimacy of the Political System* (Jaipur: Arihant, 1991). She works with a rather small sample from one state legislature, 22 out of 200.

<sup>77</sup> Punjab has been a troubled state in the eighties due to a separatist movement. It is India's most prosperous state and home to the bulk of India's sikh population. A north Indian state bordering with Pakistan, it has a population of 20.19 million.

<sup>78</sup> A K Gupta, *Emerging Pattern of Political Leadership* (New Delhi: Mittal, 1991)



educational achievement, indicating that generally the educated families were beginning to keep away from politics. This is the only study which indicates a decrease in the proportion of legislators with a rural background.

Richard Brown's study of UP MLAs suggests that they consider themselves as intermediaries between government and the people.<sup>79</sup> They felt that they were the interface in explaining government policies to their constituents and, likewise, conveying the problems faced by constituents to the government. This is the classic image of a 'bilingual' MLA, who thus becomes an effective intermediary. Our study, however, suggests that this political culture, in so far as it ever existed, has increasingly been supplanted by an errand-running culture in the intervening period.

Kunja Medhi in his study of the Assam legislature mainly describes the working process of the Assembly.<sup>80</sup> In relation to the work of the Public Accounts Committee, he finds that "the fear of having to appear before the committee had a great deterrent effect on the work of the departments of the government and kept the officers on the path of rectitude".<sup>81</sup> We are unable to comment on the Assam Assembly, but our examination of the work of the PAC elsewhere is contrary to such a conclusion. Far from any deterrent effect, the administration took little note, if any, of the PACs (see Chapter X).

---

<sup>79</sup> Richard Brown, *Indian State Legislative Behavior: The Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, 1952-1968*, Ph.D. thesis, American University, 1971, cited in Mohapatra, op.cit.

<sup>80</sup> Assam is the largest state in the North-East. This state has also seen separatist movements. Population 22.29 million.

<sup>81</sup> Kunja Medhi, *State Politics in India* (New Delhi: Omsons Publications, 1988) p. 157

Maneesha Aroon Tikekar, in a study of scheduled caste legislators of Maharashtra, found that they were extremely subordinate to the party. She defined them as Delegate/Broker/Subordinate-Loyalist, the main accent being on the last category.<sup>82</sup>

There are two studies that approach the problem in a similar way as in the present work. Even though both of these are limited to one particular state each, at least they go well beyond examining the socio-economic background of the legislators to a more detailed examination of their perceptions, attitudes, and efficacy. We are, in a limited sense, able to relate some of our findings to these where the questions asked seem similar.

The first is P D Sharma's study of the political socialization of Haryana MLAs.<sup>83</sup> While the primary emphasis is on the socio-economic background of the legislators, the study examines MLAs' views on some of India's problems. The most interesting, and in keeping with the response of our legislators from Haryana, is that to the question 'should states be given more powers?' about two-thirds of his sample disagreed. The other is that less than 25% MLAs felt that Panchayati Raj had succeeded and about an equal proportion felt that Panchayati Raj had actually created factions in villages and also created corruption. In our sample too, almost three-quarters of Haryana legislators felt that Panchayati Raj led to increased corruption (see Chapter XV).

We may relate this information to Shashishekhar Jha's study of the 1964 Bihar Assembly. He found that over one-third of legislators were pessimistic about the

---

<sup>82</sup> Maneesha Aroon Tikekar, *Scheduled Caste Legislators in Maharashtra*.. op. cit.

<sup>83</sup> P D Sharma, *Legislative Elite in India: A Study in Political Socialization* (Kurukshetra, Haryana: Vishal Publications, 1984)

future of Panchayati Raj and almost two-thirds indicated that caste and political factions were its main problems. He concluded that the leadership of the Panchayats was being cornered by the richer sections and the powerful castes.<sup>84</sup> We see similarities with our findings on this issue.

A more detailed study is by I N Tewary.<sup>85</sup> This goes beyond the socio-economic background of MLAs and examines their views on a wide range of topics related to the socio-political environment of Uttar Pradesh and India. There are several issues on which we have posed similar questions which provides some basis of comparison with our sample from Uttar Pradesh. For example, he found that for a majority of MLAs (56.71%) the motivation to enter politics came from leadership that they admired;<sup>86</sup> only 12% of our sample agreed (see Chapter IV). This is a large change from 1978 to 1992. However, our data are in agreement with his other findings: that most MLAs felt negatively about legislative committees,<sup>87</sup> (Chapter VI); that a majority of MLAs felt they were not effective,<sup>88</sup> (Chapter VII); and, over four-fifths of his sample felt that there was pervasive corruption in the system,<sup>89</sup> (Chapter XIII).

One item of consensus in the entire literature seems to be that the MLAs are primarily involved in the role of an “errand-runner”. Their law-making activities are not important as the agenda is set by the executive and the MLAs have to generally

---

<sup>84</sup> Shashishekhar Jha, *Political Elite in Bihar* (Bombay: Vora & Co., 1972)

<sup>85</sup> I N Tewary, *State Politics in India: A Study of Legislative System In Uttar Pradesh* (Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1985)

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* p. 81

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* p. 102

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* p. 220

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* p. 277

go by the party directive. Their presence in the legislature is again directed at supporting their party. It is well accepted that state legislatures in India are overshadowed by executive and bureaucracy so far as the exercise of governmental power is concerned.<sup>90</sup> Severely limited in their influence over government policy, the MLAs come into their own outside the legislature by attempting to dispense patronage and run errands for their constituents. This situation is not unique to the MLAs in India and seems to be so in most developing countries.

In conclusion, from the literature we do not know much more about the MLAs than that they are increasingly coming from rural backgrounds, and even though some of them feel that their primary function is developmental on behalf of their constituency, they mainly play the role of an errand-boy for their constituents.

---

<sup>90</sup> James Manor, 'The State of Governance' in Subroto Roy and William James (Eds.) *Foundations of India's Political Economy* (New Delhi: Sage, 1992) illustrates that in Bihar the gap between Promulgated Ordinances and Legislated Acts has gone up dramatically. For the period prior to 1967, the ratio of numbers of Ordinances as against Legislated Acts was 66:434. In the period 1967-1982, this was a staggering 2024:206. (p. 52) This highlights the marginal nature of Bihar legislature.

### III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF MLAs

#### Introduction

One variable that influences the perceptions and orientations of legislators is their socio-economic background. Some have argued that the environment in which a legislator is brought up predisposes him towards certain views; within the context of the state political culture and party policies, at least some of a legislator's perceptions are likely to have been affected by his socio-economic background and attendant life experiences.<sup>1</sup> However, we are not suggesting any specific or causal relationship between socio-economic background and issue perceptions. The point being made is that, among a complex set of variables, the socio-economic background of legislators is one factor that has a bearing on their perceptions and orientations.

Although this thesis is not about the changing socio-economic background of state legislators, we explore their residential (mainly rural or urban background), educational and occupational details in order to compare our five states. We do this in three ways: first, we relate the information from our five states to this literature. Second, we make a state-wise comparison enabling us to observe any sharp differences between states. Third, we also analyse our data on a party-wise basis which permits us to examine any distinct variations between the five main parties in our study: Cong.I, BJP, CPI(M), Janata Dal, and DMK, which together account for 87% of our total sample of MLAs.

These five parties, with the exception of DMK, were also the main political parties at the national level in India. In the 1989-91 Lok Sabha, the members from these five

---

<sup>1</sup> Wahlke et al., *The Legislative System ...*, op. cit., p. 4

parties had won 458 seats out of the House strength of 543 - 84% of the House.<sup>2</sup> Although, DMK has lost out over the years to AIADMK, it is DMK which is included in our study because it was the then (1989-91) governing party in Tamilnadu having won the election mainly due to the infighting in AIADMK after the demise of its charismatic Chief Minister, M G Ramachandran (MGR), in December 1987.<sup>3</sup>

Our sample states were chosen in a way that we had one state each ruled by one of these parties: Maharashtra - Cong.I, West Bengal - CPI(M), Tamilnadu - DMK, Uttar Pradesh - BJP, and Haryana - Janata Dal. Except for DMK which exists entirely in a single state, namely Tamilnadu, all the other parties are spread over India even though their strength may lie in a particular state or region of India. This fact also creates an ecological fallacy for us, because when a particular political party is substantially present in a single state then the data is more or less in line with what was true of that particular state. The party in this case is simply representative of the different political conditions at the state. Table III.1 illustrates the strength of the five political parties vis-à-vis the states that form part of our study.

---

<sup>2</sup> Figures compiled from David Butler et al., *India Decides* op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> AIADMK had then split into two factions, one under the leadership of Jayalalitha, a former actress and a close associate of MGR, and the other under MGR's wife, Janaki Ramachandran, who succeeded MGR as the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu. But the government had to be dismissed by the governor due to irresolvable infighting between the two factions. In the elections that followed, the two factions together won only 28 seats and DMK won the election with 151 seats out of total 232, although its share of votes remained about the same as 1984 when it had won just 24 seats.

**Table III.1**  
**State-wise strength of**  
**different Political parties (1990-91)**

| Political Party | Main State where Party is strong | Per cent of sample in the Main State |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Cong.I          | Maharashtra                      | 42%                                  |
| CPI(M)          | West Bengal                      | 82%                                  |
| BJP             | Uttar Pradesh                    | 77%                                  |
| DMK             | Tamilnadu                        | 100%                                 |
| Janata Dal      | Uttar Pradesh                    | 68%                                  |

Cong.I is by far the most dispersed political party within our sample states. DMK exists only in one state, Tamilnadu, and CPI(M) has its main strength in West Bengal. The party-wise comparison gives us an opportunity to explore whether MLAs from different parties are distinct from each other in some appreciable way.

#### RESIDENCE

On the question of main residence, MLAs were classified by their primary home, mainly with a view to determining their rural or urban orientation. It is often felt that there is a big divide between rural and urban India, its most prominent manifestation being the “Bharat versus India” slogan of Sharad Joshi.<sup>4</sup> The residences listed were normally where MLAs currently lived and where, in the foreseeable future, they expected to continue to live. This information ignores the official MLA quarters in the state capitals.

We grouped MLAs in four categories: Rural; Semi-urban; Urban; and Metropolitan. The ‘Rural’ MLA still lives in his village. The population here is small and infra-

---

<sup>4</sup> This slogan was coined to emphasize the gap between largely traditional and vernacular rural India and the city elite generally perceived to be influenced by western values. See Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi* op. cit., p. 359-60

structural facilities such as roads, schools or a medical centre are almost non-existent. 'Semi-urban' generally means an overgrown village which has more infra-structure as compared to a village; a small market, a dispensary or a medical centre, perhaps a school. 'Urban' means a town with a municipality and greater infra-structural facilities. The last category, 'Metropolitan' is self explanatory and covers the major cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras from among our sample of five states.<sup>5</sup> In a broad sense, rural and semi-urban areas belong to a generally rural category. The data is provided in Table III.2 below:

**Table III.2**  
**Residential Background of MLAs**  
**in Sampled States (1990-92)**

| STATE         | Rural     |            | Semi-urban |            | Urban      |            | Metropolitan |           |
|---------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
|               | No.       | %          | No.        | %          | No.        | %          | No.          | %         |
| Haryana       | 3         | 20%        | 2          | 13%        | 10         | 67%        | 0            | 0%        |
| Maharashtra   | 8         | 19%        | 9          | 21%        | 19         | 45%        | 6            | 14%       |
| Tamilnadu     | 9         | 24%        | 8          | 21%        | 18         | 47%        | 3            | 8%        |
| West Bengal   | 22        | 49%        | 3          | 7%         | 11         | 24%        | 9            | 20%       |
| Uttar Pradesh | 21        | 31%        | 4          | 6%         | 42         | 63%        | 0            | 0%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>63</b> | <b>30%</b> | <b>26</b>  | <b>13%</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>48%</b> | <b>18</b>    | <b>9%</b> |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, 67% had urban and 20% rural residence, Even if we add the Semi-urban category to the latter, still only 33% of MLAs had a generally rural residence. In comparison, Haryana state is 75.21% rural.<sup>6</sup> To the extent that 67% of Haryana

<sup>5</sup> Semi-urban is an ambiguous category. It is not a town with a municipality nor is it a village with a gram panchayat. It represents a small town which may not have a municipality. The census of India does not have a Semi-urban category. It classifies areas as rural or urban based upon whether a) their population is less than 5000, b) density of population is higher than 400/Km<sup>2</sup> or c) the bulk of population is in non-agricultural occupation. Necessarily, therefore, there is a certain ambiguity between semi-urban and urban. However, semi-urban is certainly more rural oriented than urban.

<sup>6</sup> According to the provisional figures of 1991 census, Haryana has 75.21 % rural population and the balance of 24.79% is urban. The census does not have a semi-urban category. It defines an urban area on the basis of a population of 5000 without taking into account its infra-structural facilities.



MLAs are resident in urban areas, they are not representative of the population mix of the state. P D Sharma points out the same characteristics of his sample.<sup>7</sup> However, 43 % of currently urban MLAs were born in a rural area and therefore had rural backgrounds. We can only speculate that their main reasons for moving to urban areas might be that rural areas lag behind in infra-structural facilities such as health and sanitation, schooling, electricity, and roads etc., as well as in employment and other economic opportunities.

In Maharashtra 45 % of MLAs were resident in urban areas, 21 % in semi-urban, 19 % in rural, and 14 % in the Greater Bombay metropolitan area: broadly 60:40 proportion in favour of urban residence. In comparison, the rural population of the state of Maharashtra is 61.27%.<sup>8</sup> Again, 40 % of MLAs born in rural areas had subsequently moved to an urban or metropolitan centre.

West Bengal presented a totally different picture. Half of the MLAs were rural based. Adding Semi-urban 56 % of MLAs lived in the countryside, reasonably in line with the state pattern where the rural population is 72.61%.<sup>9</sup> The spread between urban and the Calcutta Metropolitan Area was 24 % and 20 % respectively making a total of 44 %. Rural West Bengal, of course, has received considerably more developmental attention and success in comparison to most of the other states in India.<sup>10</sup> It may also be representative of the political strategy and organisation of the CPI(M) in West

---

<sup>7</sup> P D Sharma, *Legislative Elite in India..* op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Source, The 1991 Census (provisional figures).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Atul Kohli, *The State and Poverty in India: the politics of reform* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1987) ch.3; T J Nossiter, *Marxist State Governments in India* (London: Pinter, 1988) ch.11; Neil Webster, 'Panchayati Raj in West Bengal: Popular participation for the People or the Party' in *Development and Change*, Vol.23, No.4, Oct., '92.

Bengal. After coming to power in 1977, CPI(M) concentrated on penetrating rural areas by instituting land-reforms directed at the two lowest economic classes, the share-croppers and the land-less labourers. Kohli points out that one of the important strategies of CPI(M) was to recruit those university-level students in towns and in Calcutta who had active rural roots.<sup>11</sup> The party then made it attractive for these recruits to go back to their rural surroundings by employing them as teachers and by offering them panchayat positions. This presumably accounts for the fact that while CPI(M) has the largest proportion of MLAs with rural residence, it paradoxically also has the lowest proportion of agriculturists (See table III.4). Even these are farmers and, despite the ideological rhetoric of CPI(M), not agricultural labourers. This make-up of CPI(M) candidates is also confirmed by the limited random survey of *gram panchayat* members by Kohli which revealed that even in *gram panchayats*, landless agricultural labourers had only a marginal 8.3% representation, whereas non-agriculturists had 31.6%.<sup>12</sup>

Tamilnadu had similar characteristics to West Bengal. Of our sample of MLAs in Tamilnadu, 47% were urban, 24% reported rural residence, and 21% were from semi-urban areas. Adding the last two categories, 45% MLAs could be classified as having rural residences. This may be compared with the pattern of population in the state which has 65.8% rural population.<sup>13</sup> The balance of 55% were urban residence MLAs including 8% from Madras Metropolitan Area. Only 1 out of 12 MLAs born in rural areas had actually migrated to an urban area. This, only about 8%, is the lowest from among our sample states.

---

<sup>11</sup> Atul Kohli, *The State and Poverty in India*, op. cit., p. 105

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Source: The 1991 Census (provisional figures).

Uttar Pradesh was closer to Haryana and Maharashtra. The MLAs with urban residence were 63 %, rural 31 %, and semi-urban 6 %. Adding the last two gave us a rural proportion of 37 %. Compare this to the pattern of population in the state which is 80.11 % rural.<sup>14</sup> This is consonant with, though not necessarily due to, the BJP majority in UP (1990-92). While 69 % of the BJP sample had urban residence, the opposition was lower at 58 %. BJP legislators born in a rural area were only 59 %, while for opposition it was 79 %. About one-half (47 %) of MLAs, across ruling and opposition, who were born in rural areas had subsequently moved to urban areas.

The bulk of BJP activists and support are in the urban areas. The urban bias of BJP comes from RSS (*Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*), the parent organisation, which had concentrated on youth in overcrowded lower middle-class areas in urban India.<sup>15</sup>

It has been argued that in the last assembly elections (1990), the vote in Uttar Pradesh went to BJP contesting on a *Hindutva* platform and its candidates won from a majority of constituencies irrespective of their generally urban and in many cases non-political background. The vote was largely for the party and not for the individual candidates. Arun Kumar labels it “the saffron siege”.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Source: The 1991 Census (provisional figures). This is the largest proportion of rural population in our sample of five states.

<sup>15</sup> Tapan Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right*, (London: Sangam Books, 1993). Also see B D Graham, *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

<sup>16</sup> Arun Kumar, *The Tenth Round: Story of Indian Elections 1991* (Calcutta: Rupa & Co., 1991). In the 1990 state assembly elections the BJP won 211 of 404 seats (21 seats were countermanded following deaths of candidates and electoral malpractices) and formed the government for the first time in UP. In the previous 1989 election they had only won 57 seats. Most of their candidates fielded in the 1990 elections had no political background. But subsequent to L K Advani's *Ram Rath-Yatra* in late 1989, there was a BJP resurgence in UP. To quote Arun Kumar, “The Bharatiya Janata Party rode to power on the *Ayodhya Rath* in UP” (p.145). The previous best of BJP had been 98 seats (as Jan Sangh) in 1967, the year generally considered a watershed in India's Centre-state political equation.

In the five states, 57% of MLAs have their main residence in urban or metropolitan areas and the balance of 43% in rural or semi-urban areas. This compares with 72% rural population in the five states and 74.28% rural population in India.<sup>17</sup> One might say that the MLAs in this respect are not representative of the rural-urban mix of India, a characteristic that has been pointed out by other individual state studies.<sup>18</sup> In any case, when elections are held on a territorial basis, it is unlikely that the general characteristics of the populace will be replicated in their representatives who always tend to be the upper layers of their respective societies.

#### Residence (Party-wise):

The party-wise data are provided in table III.3 below:

**Table III.3**  
**Residential background of MLAs**  
**(Party-wise)**

| PARTY      | Rural |     | Semi-Urban |     | Urban |     | Metropolitan |     |
|------------|-------|-----|------------|-----|-------|-----|--------------|-----|
|            | No.   | %   | No.        | %   | No.   | %   | No.          | %   |
| Cong.I     | 11    | 21% | 11         | 21% | 22    | 42% | 8            | 15% |
| CPI(M)     | 17    | 52% | 1          | 3%  | 11    | 33% | 4            | 12% |
| BJP        | 10    | 26% | 4          | 10% | 23    | 59% | 2            | 5%  |
| DMK        | 2     | 11% | 5          | 26% | 11    | 58% | 1            | 5%  |
| Janata Dal | 15    | 41% | 2          | 5%  | 20    | 54% | 0            | 0%  |
| TOTAL      | 55    | 27% | 23         | 11% | 87    | 42% | 15           | 7%  |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

In Cong.I 42% were urban and 15% metropolitan. Only 21% had a rural residence and an equal 21% were semi-urban. This gave us a proportion of 57:42 in favour of

<sup>17</sup> In absolute terms the rural population in India is 627.15 million, and in our five states -- million. (Computed from the 1991 census, provisional figures).

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Richard Sisson & Lawrence Shrader, 'Social Representation and Political Integration in an Indian State: The Legislative Dimension' in Albert F Eldridge (Ed.), *Legislatures in Plural Societies* op. cit.; P D Sharma, *the Legislative Elite..* op. cit.

urban residence. One-quarter of Cong.I MLAs born in a rural area were now resident in urban or metropolitan centres.

CPI(M) had 52% MLAs with rural residence and only 3% lived in semi-urban areas, giving us a total of 55% MLAs who had their main residence in a non-urban location. Of the balance 45%, 33% were urban and 12% metropolitan. This is substantially representative of West Bengal as we observed earlier. Only 16% of the CPI(M) MLAs who were born in rural areas had subsequently moved to an urban or metropolitan area.

DMK presented a different picture. The MLAs of this party were distributed mainly between urban (58%) and semi-urban (26%) areas. Of the five political parties, DMK had the minimum proportion of rural MLAs (11%). Taking account of those who had their main residence in Madras, DMK had a 67:33 proportion in favour of urban areas. Of rural-born DMK MLAs, 25% had subsequently moved to an urban area.

BJP too had most MLAs with urban residence. Of our sample of MLAs from BJP, 59% were urban, 26% were from rural areas, 10% semi-urban, and 5% from metropolitan areas. This appears to reaffirm that BJP has until now remained a party with urban orientation and urban support. A large proportion of BJP MLAs (40%) who were born in a rural area were now resident in urban areas.

Janata Dal was closer to Cong.I in its pattern. The MLAs with rural residence were 41%, semi-urban 5%, and urban 54%. Of the Janata Dal MLAs who were born in a rural area, 44% had subsequently moved to an urban area.

Overall, Cong.I presented a 'mixed' picture, CPI(M) was mainly rural, BJP and DMK predominantly urban, and Janata Dal similar to Cong.I. The proportion of MLAs with an urban or metropolitan residence (56%) is the same as in the case of the state-wise sample of all MLAs. Of these, one-third (34%) were born in a rural area but had subsequently moved to an urban or metropolitan area.

## OCCUPATION

The next socio-economic variable we explore is the occupational background of our sample MLAs. This may also be an influence on the ideological moorings of legislators through the bias it can generate on their issue preference. Clearly, the orientation of an advocate is unlikely to be identical to that of an agriculturist or even a businessman, because the issues and problems they encounter in their respective spheres can be entirely different. Table III.4 below presents our data.

**Table III.4**  
**Main Occupations of MLAs**

| Occupation     | Haryana |     | Maharashtra |     | Tamilnadu |     | West Bengal |     | Uttar Pradesh |     | Total |     |
|----------------|---------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                | No.     | %   | No.         | %   | No.       | %   | No.         | %   | No.           | %   | No.   | %   |
| Agriculture    | 8       | 53% | 19          | 45% | 13        | 34% | 4           | 9%  | 20            | 30% | 63    | 30% |
| Business       | 2       | 13% | 3           | 7%  | 3         | 8%  | 2           | 4%  | 9             | 13% | 20    | 10% |
| Advocate       | 1       | 7%  | 3           | 7%  | 9         | 24% | 1           | 2%  | 4             | 6%  | 18    | 9%  |
| Doctor         | 0       | 0%  | 3           | 7%  | 2         | 5%  | 1           | 2%  | 2             | 3%  | 8     | 4%  |
| Teaching       | 0       | 0%  | 0           | 0%  | 1         | 3%  | 17          | 38% | 6             | 9%  | 24    | 12% |
| Politics Only  | 4       | 27% | 10          | 24% | 7         | 18% | 14          | 31% | 22            | 33% | 57    | 28% |
| Social Service | 0       | 0%  | 1           | 2%  | 0         | 0%  | 1           | 2%  | 2             | 3%  | 4     | 2%  |
| Trade Union    | 0       | 0%  | 1           | 2%  | 2         | 5%  | 3           | 7%  | 0             | 0%  | 5     | 2%  |
| Other          | 0       | 0%  | 2           | 5%  | 1         | 3%  | 2           | 4%  | 2             | 3%  | 8     | 4%  |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, a majority (53%) of MLAs were agriculturists.<sup>19</sup> Their families were still cultivating land even though they themselves had no time to spare for it in view of their preoccupation with politics. 27% did not have a formal occupation, but were full time engaged in politics and party affairs. There was no trade union representation, the state being primarily agricultural or having only small and medium-scale industries. We did not find any correlation between the occupations and the party affiliations of the MLAs and the general findings applied irrespective of party.

In Maharashtra, the majority occupation (45% of the sample) was again agriculture.<sup>20</sup> The next highest proportion (24%) was 'full-time politics'. Ruling party (Cong.I) MLAs were largely agriculturists - 59%, as compared to the opposition's 30%, presumably because the main opposition parties, namely Shiv-Sena and BJP are both comparatively urban support-based parties. Those in full-time politics came equally from both sides. Only 7% of MLAs owned private businesses - less than might be expected in Maharashtra, vibrant commercially and often called India's commercial capital. But politics in Maharashtra is based on the hegemony of the *Maratha* elite who are mainly involved in commercial agriculture.<sup>21</sup> They are sometimes referred to as 'sugar barons' due to the political control of sugar cooperatives by them.<sup>22</sup> Private businessmen are busy exploiting the commercial

---

<sup>19</sup> This is closer to the overall 75.21% rural population of Haryana.

<sup>20</sup> This corresponds to 61% rural population of Maharashtra.

<sup>21</sup> See Jayant Lele, 'Caste, Class, and Dominance: Political Mobilization in Maharashtra' in Frankel and Rao (Eds.), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India* Vol.II (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>22</sup> B S Baviskar, *The Politics of Development: Sugar Co-operatives in Rural Maharashtra* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980)

opportunities that the state provides and are generally disinterested in pursuing political office.

Of Tamilnadu MLAs, 34% were agriculturists and a significant proportion (24%) were lawyers. This latter seems peculiar to South India as the neighbouring state of Kerala exhibits similar pattern.<sup>23</sup> Young persons who wish to make politics their profession tend to go for the law degree. This may be a legacy of colonial times, when the regime did not provide effective opportunities for many professions, thereby encouraging the young from well-to-do families to get into the legal profession. There was no disadvantage on ethnic grounds, and there was an effective demand for legal services.<sup>24</sup> This relates to the fact that the same pattern existed at the national level in the immediately post independence period, but changed over a period of time.<sup>25</sup> This apart, the political culture of the state puts a great premium on the oratorical and debating skills of electoral candidates, and a degree in law tends to give candidates confidence that they would perform well on these two counts. We met several MLAs who said that they had opted for a degree in law because they wanted to get into politics.

The ruling party (DMK) had proportionately far fewer MLAs who were agriculturists (18% compared to the opposition's 56%) but somewhat more lawyers (27% against the opposition's 19%). We also discern, taking into account the residence data, a

---

<sup>23</sup> See T J Nossiter, *Communism in Kerala: A Study in Political Adaptation* (London: C Hurst & Co., 1982)

<sup>24</sup> Edward Shils, 'The Intellectual in the Political Development of the New States' in Harvey Kebschull (Ed.) *Politics in Transitional Societies: The Challenge of Change in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (New York: Appleton, 1968) pp. 171-79

<sup>25</sup> In the first Lok Sabha (1952-57) the proportion of lawyers was a hefty 35.6% which is the maximum that it ever was, falling to 19.1% in the eight Lok Sabha (1980-84). *Socio-Economic Background of Lok Sabha Members*, op. cit.



relatively urban support base of the ruling DMK as compared to AIADMK or Cong.I. Again in Tamilnadu, as in Haryana and Maharashtra, a fair proportion (18%) had no occupation except politics.

West Bengal was very different. Paradoxically, agriculture accounted for only 9% of the MLAs - the lowest among all our states - despite the fact that half of our sample was from rural areas. The maximum proportion of West Bengal MLAs were teachers (38%), and 31% were in full-time politics. These figures were heavily biased to the ruling left-front. 42% of the ruling left-front MLAs were teachers, but only 22% of the opposition. Full time party workers in the left-front were 39%, but negligible for the opposition, mainly Cong.I. Teaching positions at village level have been given to Left-front party workers which apart from benefiting loyal party workers and creating a vested interest in the continuation of the left-front government, helps in canvassing support for the leftist ideology at village level.

Uttar Pradesh was a surprise. Intuitively one might have expected a large representation of agriculturists in a predominantly rural state (over 80% rural population),<sup>26</sup> and a state with dominant agrarian politics.<sup>27</sup> In fact, less than a third (30%) of MLAs were agriculturists. This can not be explained by the urban orientation of the ruling BJP, which had only 21% agriculturists, as the proportion of agriculturists in the main opposition parties - Janata Dal and Cong.I - was only 37% compared to the state percentage of 30%. We may compare this with the 59%

---

<sup>26</sup> Source, The 1991 Census (Provisional figures)

<sup>27</sup> See for example, Paul Brass, 'Division in the Congress and the Rise of Agrarian Interests and Issues in Uttar Pradesh Politics, 1952 to 1977' in John R Wood (Ed.) *State Politics in Contemporary India: Crisis or Continuity* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1984)

of Cong.I in Maharashtra, or with 54% of Janata Dal in Haryana. One-third (31%) had no other occupation except politics.

Overall, the largest proportion of MLAs (30%) were agriculturists, but given that these five states averaged 72% rural population, this figure was modest and not representative of the rural-urban ratio. This apart, the rural population of India consists of a vast number of marginal farmers and landless labourers who do not have access to positions of political power. Representation from their ranks is almost non-existent. The second highest proportion (28%) consisted of MLAs in full time politics with no other occupation.

It is often assumed that the state-level politicians are more rural as compared to the MPs at national level. However, we are confronted by the fact that the 8th Lok Sabha (1980-84) had a higher proportion of agriculturists (38%) than the average we found in our sample state assemblies.<sup>28</sup> This appears to indicate that in the 1990s, state legislatures are no more rural oriented than the Lok Sabha. Reasons for the difference in their respective political cultures probably lie elsewhere and may well be found mainly in the compulsions of the 'traditional' language and the resultant forms of behaviour at state level.<sup>29</sup>

### **Occupation (Party-wise)**

The party-wise data are presented in table III.5 below:

---

<sup>28</sup> Subhash C Kashyap, *Socio-Economic Background of Lok Sabha Members* (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1987)

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter I

**Table III.5**  
**Main Occupations of MLAs**  
**(Party-wise)**

| Occupation     | Cong.I |     | CPI(M) |     | BJP |     | DMK |     | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|----------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                | No.    | %   | No.    | %   | No. | %   | No. | %   | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| Agriculture    | 26     | 50% | 4      | 12% | 8   | 21% | 4   | 21% | 18         | 49% | 60    | 33% |
| Business       | 5      | 10% |        | 0%  | 10  | 26% | 2   | 11% | 3          | 8%  | 20    | 11% |
| Advocate       | 3      | 6%  | 1      | 3%  | 3   | 8%  | 5   | 26% | 3          | 8%  | 15    | 8%  |
| Doctor         | 2      | 4%  | 0      | 0%  | 2   | 5%  | 2   | 11% | 1          | 3%  | 7     | 4%  |
| Teaching       | 3      | 6%  | 10     | 30% | 3   | 8%  | 0   | 0%  | 1          | 3%  | 17    | 9%  |
| Politics only  | 10     | 19% | 14     | 42% | 9   | 23% | 5   | 26% | 10         | 27% | 50    | 28% |
| Social service | 0      | 0%  | 0      | 0%  | 2   | 5%  | 0   | 0%  | 1          | 3%  | 3     | 2%  |
| Trade Union    | 0      | 0%  | 4      | 12% | 0   | 0%  | 0   | 0%  | 0          | 0%  | 2     | 1%  |
| Other          | 3      | 6%  | 0      | 0%  | 2   | 5%  | 1   | 5%  | 0          | 0%  | 6     | 3%  |

Note: N = Cong.I 52, CPI(M) 33, BJP 39, DMK 19, Janata Dal 37, and Total 180.

In Cong.I, 50% were in agriculture, mostly absentee farmers not agricultural labourers. The next highest proportion (19%) were full-time politicians. Business accounted for 10% of the legislators and there was no representation from trade unions despite the fact the Cong.I controls the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC). This is not peculiar to Cong.I. No other party, with a marginal exception of the CPI(M), had any trade union representatives. The reasons are not difficult to see. Even when a union may appear to have a large membership, the actual dues-paying members may only be a fraction of the total on the register. Also, the unions are mainly urban based, whereas electorally India is rural. Second, and more important, the workers' primary identity is seldom with the union as opposed to caste, community, region and religion.<sup>30</sup> Since they do not necessarily represent a 'block vote', trade unions are marginal in political calculations.

<sup>30</sup> See Kuriakose Mamkoottam, *Trade Unionism: Myth and Reality* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982). He argues that the "Indian labour force is extremely diverse in its aspirations and ideology. It lacks homogeneity of structure and interest". p. 124

Among CPI(M) MLAs, agriculture (farmers, not agricultural labourers) accounted for only 12 % of legislators though the bulk of CPI(M)'s legislators were from rural areas and the party has a substantial rural base. Despite the fact that the essence of CPI(M) land reforms were directed at the landless labourers and sharecroppers, neither category has found its way into the Assembly. Most CPI(M) MLAs were full time political workers at 42 % of the sample. Almost one-third (30 %), were teachers - the highest proportion in our study. A further important fact is that 80 % of these teacher MLAs were resident in rural areas, highlighting the political strategy of the CPI(M) discussed above. For all its stance and leaning toward Trade Unions, only 12 % of the CPI(M) MLAs were from Trade Unions.<sup>31</sup>

In the BJP, there was no clear majority occupation. At 26 %, private business had the highest proportion of MLAs, 23 % were in full-time politics, and agriculture ranked third at 21 %. This highlights the urban characteristics of BJP and the fact that the appeal of its parent organisation, RSS, was directed at the lower middle classes in towns where it received a high degree of acceptance among small traders.<sup>32</sup> The centre of BJP's (in its previous incarnation as Jan Sangh) focus was "a cluster of urban groups, chiefly small industrialists, traders and people on the lower rungs of the professional and administrative hierarchies".<sup>33</sup> The party saw itself as a spokesman for their interests.

In the DMK, lawyers (26 %) were by far the largest proportion from among all our parties. As DMK was a single-state party, this reflected the political characteristics

---

<sup>31</sup> This may be contrasted with Kerala, where a majority of state legislators held positions in unions. See T J Nossiter, *Communism in Kerala* (London: C. Hurst, 1982) ch.3

<sup>32</sup> See Tapan Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts...*, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> B D Graham, *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990) ch.6

of the state of Tamilnadu. In any case there is a higher emphasis on education in the two southern-most states, Literacy in Tamilnadu is 54.6% and in Kerala 78% - the highest among Indian states.<sup>34</sup> An equal 26% were in full-time politics and 21% were agriculturists.

In Janata Dal, like Cong.I, a majority of legislators were agriculturists (49%). Their families were still cultivating land. Over a quarter (27%) had no occupation other than politics and party affairs.

In sum, most agriculturist MLAs came from Cong.I (50%) and Janata Dal (49%). BJP and DMK were less than half at 21% each in agriculture and the CPI(M) had only 12% despite its predominantly rural orientation. For full-time political workers CPI(M) led with 48% The other parties had much lower, but significant, proportions; Janata Dal 27%, DMK 26%, and BJP 23%.

Three occupations lend themselves rather distinctly to one political party or the other and, in all probability, influence its sub-culture. Teachers came mainly from CPI(M) at 30%, the next was BJP at only 8%; advocates came mainly from DMK (26%), the next were BJP and Janata Dal at 8% each; and, MLAs who were businessmen and traders came mainly from BJP (26%), DMK being the poor second at 11%.

## EDUCATION

Education is seen to play a dichotomous role in developing societies. On the one hand, its role in long term economic and political development is perceived to be

---

<sup>34</sup> Source, The 1991 Census (Provisional figures). Tamilnadu is the second highest after Kerala among larger states. Among smaller states, Goa has a literacy level of 66.95% but its population base is only 1.16 million as against 55.63 million of Tamilnadu. The average for India is 42.89%.

positive. Sidney Verba notes that “education is still probably the single most important thing that underlies and ensures democracy.”<sup>35</sup> This may be debatable, but education is certainly seen as a “correlate, if not a requisite, of a democratic order”<sup>36</sup> There is some strength in the basic argument that educated people are more committed to liberal democratic values and that their threshold of accepting violations of democracy would be discernibly higher than that of the less educated. The fact that the more stable democracies of the world are also more educated lends credence to the argument.

Some have also argued that education is an integrating factor in a society. Coleman himself comments that “the integrating role of education in nation building is more or less self-evident”.<sup>37</sup> P J Thomas, in a recent study of tribals in Attapady, Kerala, illustrates that while most tribals thought of themselves as *adivasis* and not even Keralites, an overwhelming proportion of students from the community identified themselves as “Indians”.<sup>38</sup> An exposure to the school and a basic education had given them a sense of a larger identity which transcended their immediate surroundings. Economically, World Bank studies have endorsed the view that education is a significant contributory factor to sustained economic development.<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, education is also seen to be, at least in the short and medium term, a contributory factor to political instability. Coleman warns that education may

---

<sup>35</sup> Sidney Verba, ‘Threats to Democracy: A Research Perspective’ in *The Transition to Democracy* (Washington, DC: A.I.D., 1990) p. 79.

<sup>36</sup> James A Coleman (Ed.), *Education and Political Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965) p.4

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30

<sup>38</sup> P J Thomas, *The Role of Welfare Programmes in the Political Socialization of Scheduled Tribes in Attapady in Kerala* (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Kerala, 1992)

<sup>39</sup> World Development Report 1991, p.42

perpetuate the elite-mass gap.<sup>40</sup> W F Wertheim talks of the initial danger that increased awareness through education of the masses and their resultant rise on “the ladder of social stratification” could pose to a developing system.<sup>41</sup> The same line of argument is adopted by Rajni Kothari who argues that,

contrary to general impression, modernization - especially education - leads to an awareness of distinctive identities, breaks down traditional modes of recognition and mobility, and emphasizes numerical strength and organised competition as a means of finding a place in the system.<sup>42</sup>

Both lines of argument can easily be overstated. Certainly in the first case education is probably a necessary condition, but for the latter it is neither necessary nor sufficient. Nevertheless, we can not deny that education is a strong influence on the society and therefore on the polity. Verba et al. illustrate that higher education was positively correlated to higher political participation in several societies including India.<sup>43</sup> However, the same processes and changes through which education might promote integrative values may also work to intensify local and sub-national identities and thus be dysfunctional to the system particularly if the ‘system’ is not delivering.

With specific reference to India, some have contended, with a mistaken assumption correlating formal education with modernity and the attendant rules of the game, that there should be a statutory minimum educational qualification for candidates who contest election for political office. This, it is assumed, would help to check the

---

<sup>40</sup> James Coleman, *Education and Political Development* op., cit.

<sup>41</sup> W Wertheim, *Evolutions and Revolutions* (England: Penguin Books, 1974)

<sup>42</sup> *Politics in India* op. cit., p. 64. Elsewhere he says that by preparing “human beings for opportunities that are not easily forthcoming, it (education) creates a climate of frustration and leads to a general demand for change”. p. 375

<sup>43</sup> Sidney Verba, Norman Nie, and Jae-On Kim, *Participation and Political Equality: A Seven Nation Comparison* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1978)

“wayward conduct” of legislators.<sup>44</sup> State Assemblies in India have become notorious for rowdy and obstructionist behaviour by MLAs who occasionally have had to be physically removed from the House. Harinder Chhabra provides several instances of offensive behaviour in State Assemblies, including punching and kicking by MLAs. He cites an incident when a legislator threw his shoe and hit the Dy. speaker of the House on the back of his head.<sup>45</sup> Whether such behaviour is at least partially reflective of lower levels of education in state assemblies is a question that our data attempt to answer.

Table III.6 below provides the information pertaining to educational qualifications of MLAs in our five states.

---

<sup>44</sup> Hari Jaisingh, ‘Time for a Second Republic’ in Subash C Kashyap (Ed.), *Reforming the Constitution* (New Delhi: UBSPD, 1992) p. 225; H S Fartaya, *Role of Opposition in the Indian Parliament* (Allahabad: Chaitanya Publishing, 1971) p. 227

<sup>45</sup> H K Chhabra & W T Jones, *State Politics in India* (Delhi: Surjeet Publications, 1980) pp. 147-49. In any case, one only needs to look through local newspapers to read about the scenes in most state assemblies. We found rough behaviour in all the state assemblies that we witnessed during the field work in various states. As regards defection, during 1967 the whole party strength in the Haryana legislature defected to the other side. J R Siwach quotes the example of one particular legislator who defected twice in a day; see *Dynamics of Indian Government and Politics*, second edition, (New Delhi: Sterling, 1990) p. 641



**Table III.6**  
**Educational Background of MLAs**

| EDUCATION                   | Haryana  |            | Maharashtra |            | Tamilnadu |            | West Bengal |            | Uttar Pradesh |            | Total      |            |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                             | No.      | %          | No.         | %          | No.       | %          | No.         | %          | No.           | %          | No.        | %          |
| Literate only               |          | 0%         | 4           | 10%        | 3         | 8%         | 4           | 9%         | 0             | 0%         | 11         | 5%         |
| Primary/middle              |          | 0%         | 2           | 5%         | 4         | 11%        | 2           | 4%         | 7             | 10%        | 15         | 7%         |
| <b>Sub-total</b>            |          | <b>0%</b>  | <b>6</b>    | <b>15%</b> | <b>7</b>  | <b>19%</b> | <b>6</b>    | <b>13%</b> | <b>7</b>      | <b>10%</b> | <b>26</b>  | <b>12%</b> |
| Matric                      | 6        | 40%        | 6           | 14%        | 3         | 8%         | 5           | 11%        | 1             | 1%         | 21         | 10%        |
| Graduate                    | 3        | 20%        | 9           | 21%        | 5         | 13%        | 12          | 27%        | 15            | 22%        | 44         | 21%        |
| Graduate & Law              | 4        | 27%        | 7           | 17%        | 14        | 37%        | 2           | 4%         | 8             | 12%        | 35         | 17%        |
| Post-Graduate               | 1        | 7%         | 5           | 12%        | 2         | 5%         | 11          | 24%        | 17            | 25%        | 36         | 17%        |
| Post-Graduate & Law         |          | 0%         | 2           | 5%         | 4         | 11%        | 1           | 2%         | 7             | 10%        | 14         | 7%         |
| Professional degree         | 1        | 7%         | 4           | 10%        | 2         | 5%         | 3           | 7%         | 5             | 7%         | 15         | 7%         |
| <b>Graduate &amp; Above</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>60%</b> | <b>27</b>   | <b>64%</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>71%</b> | <b>29</b>   | <b>64%</b> | <b>52</b>     | <b>78%</b> | <b>144</b> | <b>70%</b> |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

The first observation is that none of the states had any illiterate legislators. Those who had no formal qualifications were at least literate. In any case, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to become a legislator in a competitive democracy without literacy. In Haryana, 60% of MLAs were graduates or higher (in Indian terms this means a Bachelor's degree or higher), the remainder were at least matriculates. These educational qualifications cut across party lines and MLAs from both sides of the House had similar levels of formal educational qualifications. These figures come from a state that has 75% agricultural population and 55% illiteracy.<sup>46</sup>

In addition, over half of the Haryana MLAs could understand and express themselves in English as assessed by the author. This is important as westernized education is a

<sup>46</sup> Census of India, 1991 (Provisional figures)

criterion of social status in contemporary India.<sup>47</sup> A working knowledge of English is also important when state politicians have to interact with central bureaucracy, as the language of the administration is still English.

Maharashtra too had a high proportion of MLAs (64%) who were 'Graduates and above'. A further 21% were matriculates. The balance of 15% qualified as literate as most had been to school till about primary or middle levels. These figures cut across party lines. 55% of the sample spoke English reasonably well and those who had poor or no knowledge of English were only 22% of the sample. It reaffirms the elite status of MLAs, as 46% of the population of Maharashtra is illiterate.<sup>48</sup>

In Tamilnadu, 'Graduates and above' constituted 71% of the MLAs and 11% were matriculates. The balance of 19% MLAs were literate and all had been to primary or middle school. In anti-Hindi Tamilnadu, 71% of MLAs spoke English well with 22% who had little or no knowledge of English. No bias towards ruling or opposition party was detected. As a state, Tamilnadu has the same level of illiteracy as Maharashtra (46%).<sup>49</sup>

In West Bengal, 'Graduates and above' were 64%. A further 22% were matriculates and the balance of 14% had primary or middle school education. In keeping with the rural representation of the left-front MLAs, the proportion of 'Graduates and above' was much higher in the opposition Cong(I) - 89%, as against 58% in the ruling left-front. West Bengal had 58% MLAs who could speak English, a good proportion for

---

<sup>47</sup> Marcus Franda pointed to this in his analysis of the *bhadralok* in Bengal, but his generalisation is applicable to most parts of India. See *Political Development and Political Decay in Bengal* (Calcutta: Firma K L Mukhopadhyay, 1971) p. 21.

<sup>48</sup> Census of India 1991 (Provisional figures)

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

a predominantly rural legislature, and a state with 52% illiteracy.<sup>50</sup> Part of the explanation of this may be found in Poromesh Acharya's argument that the Bengali *bhadralok* through their grip on the education system have maintained the importance of English in Bengal.<sup>51</sup>

In Uttar Pradesh, a predominantly rural state with 66% illiteracy,<sup>52</sup> an unanticipated 78% of MLAs - the highest proportion of MLAs from our states - had a Bachelor's degree or above. In addition, 12% were Matriculates leaving only 10% who had attended just up to middle-level school. Also there were only 28% of MLAs who had poor or no knowledge of English, while 42% had good knowledge of English. That this should be so in the Hindi-heartland which has often seen anti-English rhetoric by politicians is a strong pointer to the fact that English is valued as the language of the elite. The educational qualifications of UP MLAs cut across party lines.

Overall, 70% MLAs have a Bachelor's degree or a higher educational qualification. This indicates that the state-level legislators generally have good formal education, contrary to the popular perception among the urban élites.

The supposed inverse correlation between the level of formal education and patterns of "wayward" behaviour is not detected here as despite formal college or university education, instances of unprincipled and rowdy behaviour have continued in most

---

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Poromesh Acharya, 'Is Macaulay Still Our Guru?' *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 28, 1988

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

state assemblies.<sup>53</sup> We may infer that the level of formal education, at least at state-level politics in India, has no correlation to the ethics of political life in the states defined in terms of principled (e.g. no defections), clean (as opposed to corrupt), and disciplined (compared to the general pandemonium in most assemblies) patterns of behaviour.<sup>54</sup>

The commonly held belief that MPs are better educated and MLAs rustic is tested with the above information. In the 1980-84 Lok Sabha, 'Graduates and above' were an identical 70%, and in 1984-89, 74% - a marginally higher proportion.<sup>55</sup> At least in terms of formal educational qualifications, there is no longer a significant gap between the Indian MPs and a majority of state-level MLAs. However, it is difficult to place all 'Graduates' on the same scale as standards of education can vary a great deal between states and intra-state between different universities. Education at state level has not received adequate attention of Indian leadership and its continuing poor standards are one of the major failings of independent India.<sup>56</sup>

### Education (Party-wise)

The party-wise data are presented in table III.7 below:

---

<sup>53</sup> Harinder Chhabra & W T Wilson, *State Politics in India*, op. cit.

<sup>54</sup> One only needs to look through local newspapers to read about the scenes in most state assemblies. We found rough behaviour in all the state assemblies that we witnessed during the field work in various states. As regards defection, just after the 1967 general elections there were daily crossings and re-crossings of floor in the Haryana legislature. One legislator defected five times in less than nine months. See Subhash C Kashyap, *The Politics of Defection* op. cit. p. 98

<sup>55</sup> Figure from Arun Kumar, *The Tenth Round*, op. cit., p. 123. In the 1980-84 Lok Sabha this proportion was 71% (Subhash C Kashyap, *Socio-Economic Background of Lok Sabha Members*, Monograph series, Lok Sabha, 1987).

<sup>56</sup> See Karuna Ahmad, 'Towards a Study of Education and Social Change', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.14, No.4, Jan.,1979. For an illuminating description of education at local levels, see R S Newman, *Grassroots Education in India: A Challenge for Policy-makers* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1989)

**Table III.7**  
**Educational Background of MLAs**  
**(Party-wise)**

| EDUCATION                   | Cong.I    |            | CPI(M)    |            | BJP       |            | DMK       |            | Janata Dal |            | Total      |            |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                             | No.       | %          | No.       | %          | No.       | %          | No.       | %          | No.        | %          | No.        | %          |
| Literate only               | 4         | 8%         | 5         | 15%        | 1         | 3%         | 1         | 5%         | 0          | 0%         | 11         | 5%         |
| Primary/middle              | 3         | 6%         | 2         | 6%         | 5         | 13%        | 2         | 11%        | 2          | 5%         | 14         | 7%         |
| <b>Sub-total</b>            | <b>7</b>  | <b>14%</b> | <b>7</b>  | <b>21%</b> | <b>6</b>  | <b>16%</b> | <b>3</b>  | <b>16%</b> | <b>2</b>   | <b>5%</b>  | <b>25</b>  | <b>14%</b> |
| Matric                      | 1         | 2%         | 5         | 15%        | 3         | 8%         | 2         | 11%        | 5          | 14%        | 16         | 8%         |
| Graduate                    | 16        | 31%        | 10        | 30%        | 7         | 18%        | 1         | 5%         | 4          | 11%        | 38         | 18%        |
| Graduate & Law              | 12        | 23%        | 1         | 3%         | 3         | 8%         | 9         | 47%        | 10         | 27%        | 35         | 17%        |
| Post-Graduate               | 5         | 10%        | 7         | 21%        | 9         | 23%        | 0         | 0%         | 7          | 19%        | 28         | 14%        |
| Post-Graduate & Law         | 5         | 10%        | 0         | 0%         | 2         | 5%         | 1         | 5%         | 3          | 8%         | 11         | 5%         |
| Professional degree         | 4         | 8%         | 3         | 9%         | 3         | 8%         | 2         | 11%        | 3          | 8%         | 15         | 7%         |
| <b>Graduate &amp; Above</b> | <b>42</b> | <b>81%</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>64%</b> | <b>24</b> | <b>62%</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>68%</b> | <b>27</b>  | <b>73%</b> | <b>127</b> | <b>61%</b> |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

A substantial majority (81 %) of MLAs from Cong.I were 'Graduates and above' and 86% could manage to speak and understand at least a fair amount of English. Only 4% of Cong.I MLAs had no knowledge of English and another 10% had poor knowledge of English.

The CPI(M), among our states, had the lowest proportion (55 %) of MLAs who were 'Graduates and above'; 21% were matriculates; and 15% only literate. CPI(M) also had the highest proportion of MLAs at 21% who were below Matriculation, emphasizing the rural background of most CPI(M) legislators. However, 45% of the sample spoke English reasonably well and those who had poor knowledge of English were 21% of the sample. Only 12% knew no English. This fits in with the importance of westernized education pointed out by Franda and Acharya in relation to the *bhadralok* culture of West Bengal.

In line with its mainly urban and middle-class representation, 62% of BJP MLAs were 'Graduates and above'. It also had the highest proportion (23%) of Post Graduates (Master's degree holders) among the parties in our study. The proportion of MLAs who spoke and understood English was 62%. Those who had poor or no knowledge of English were 38%.

DMK too had a high proportion of 'Graduates and above' at 68%. Unusually, 47% of the MLAs from DMK had a Law degree which was by far the highest proportion from among our sample of political parties. We have noted above that this was also the culture at national level in the immediately post-Independence period. In the first Lok Sabha (1952-57), 36% of MPs were lawyers. By the 8th Lok Sabha (1980-84) this had dropped to 19% and in 1989 to 15.64%.<sup>57</sup> V A Paipanadikar and Arun Sud, in their study of Lok Sabha noted that this portrayed a "basic transfer of political power from the urban middle class as represented by the legal profession, to the rural agricultural class".<sup>58</sup> The initial proportions were perhaps reflective of the early Congress machinery which was dominated by lawyers.<sup>59</sup> In second position behind Cong.I, the DMK had a high proportion of MLAs (78%) who had good or fair knowledge of English.

Janata Dal had 73% MLAs who had a Bachelor's degree or above and only 5% were non-Matriculates. In respect of education, the Janata Dal was second only to Cong.I. So far as their knowledge of English was concerned, three quarters (75%) of the

---

<sup>57</sup> Subash C Kashyap, *Socio-Economic Background of Lok Sabha Members*, op. cit. For the 1989 figure, see Arun Kumar, *The Tenth Round* op. cit.

<sup>58</sup> V A Paipanadikar and Arun Sud, *Emerging Pattern of Representation in the Indian Parliament* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 1981) p. 101

<sup>59</sup> Stanley Kochanek, *The Congress Party of India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969) ch.xiii

Janata Dal MLAs had a good or fair knowledge, leaving about a quarter who had poor knowledge of English.

Overall, 69% MLAs had a Bachelor's degree or higher educational qualification and three-quarters also had a good or a fair knowledge of English. Upon checking whether there was any correlation between the residence of the MLAs and their levels of education, we found that there was an appreciable bias towards urban or metropolitan residences. Whereas only 49% of the MLAs in our sample data had their residence in an urban or metropolitan area, this group provided 65% of the MLAs who had a Graduate degree or higher qualification. Looking at it another way, while 69% of the total MLAs from our sample were 'Graduates or above', of those who lived in an urban or metropolitan area 79% fell into this category.

## **IV. POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BACKGROUND**

In this chapter we investigate three issues on our state-wise and party-wise scale: First, what motivated MLAs to become politicians; second, their background of prior political activity; and third, their changing political affiliations. Response to each of these throws important light on the political culture in, and on the differences between, each state.

### **MOTIVATION TO JOIN POLITICS**

Wahlke et al. have argued that political careers are “less dependent on recruitment and more dependent on structural conditions of the political system”.<sup>1</sup> It would, therefore, be illogical to assume that political careers were chosen as a result of any single reason as there would always be a process, rather than any one factor, involved. We asked our MLAs to identify the main reason for their interest in politics. The open-ended question, “why did you enter politics?” brought a wide range of response, making aggregation awkward for the purposes of comparison. Perhaps this is to be expected when posing open-ended questions, but the advantage is that the response pattern, not forced into any pre-determined classifications, is more representative of the legislators’ self-definitions relating to their political career. Clearly, this approach is not suitable in all cases, but wherever we felt it to be suitable we adopted it throughout our thesis.

---

<sup>1</sup> Wahlke et al., *The Legislative System..* op.cit. p. 74



Wahlke et al. encountered the same problem and resolved it by grouping the responses into five categories.<sup>2</sup> We group into four categories, slightly modifying the Wahlke conceptualization: a) *Personal Dispositions* - this indicates a degree of pre-disposition towards politics as a career; b) *Family/Group/Leader Influence* - this is indicative of an outside source of influence on the decision to enter politics. Even where MLAs responded that “people wanted them to contest elections” or that the “party approached them unilaterally”, we have included the response in this group; c) *Ideology* - this represents a belief system, usually the leftist or *Hindutva*; and, d) *Political and other Movements* - this is representative of active participation in political or non-political movements which become a “push” factor in the decision to become a politician. The data are presented in table IV.1 below:

---

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* They grouped the response they received into five major categories based on what their sample of legislators identified as the main source of their interest in politics. Their groupings were, *Primary Groups, Political or civic participation, Particular events or conditions, Personal dispositions, and Socio-economic beliefs.* (Ch.4)

**Table IV.1**  
**Motivation to Join Politics**

| REASON                                        | Haryana  |            | Maharashtra |            | Tamilnadu |            | West Bengal |            | Uttar Pradesh |            | Total     |            |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                                               | No.      | %          | No.         | %          | No.       | %          | No.         | %          | No.           | %          | No.       | %          |
| <b>Personal Disposition:</b>                  |          |            |             |            |           |            |             |            |               |            |           |            |
| Self-Motivation                               | 6        | 40%        | 4           | 10%        | 14        | 37%        | 2           | 4%         | 4             | 6%         | 30        | 14%        |
| For Social Service                            | 3        | 20%        | 10          | 24%        | 5         | 13%        | 2           | 4%         | 5             | 7%         | 25        | 12%        |
| Saw Oppression and Poverty Around             |          | 0%         | 3           | 7%         | 2         | 5%         | 8           | 17%        | 11            | 16%        | 24        | 12%        |
| <b>Sub-total:</b>                             | <b>9</b> | <b>60%</b> | <b>17</b>   | <b>41%</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>55%</b> | <b>12</b>   | <b>25%</b> | <b>20</b>     | <b>29%</b> | <b>79</b> | <b>38%</b> |
| <b>Family/Group/Leader Influence:</b>         |          |            |             |            |           |            |             |            |               |            |           |            |
| Family Background                             | 3        | 20%        | 5           | 12%        | 5         | 13%        | 12          | 27%        | 10            | 15%        | 35        | 17%        |
| Motivated by a Leader                         |          | 0%         | 7           | 17%        | 6         | 16%        | 3           | 7%         | 8             | 12%        | 24        | 12%        |
| Party and/or People Insisted                  |          | 0%         | 7           | 17%        |           | 0%         |             | 0%         | 3             | 4%         | 10        | 5%         |
| <b>Sub-total:</b>                             | <b>3</b> | <b>20%</b> | <b>19</b>   | <b>46%</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>29%</b> | <b>15</b>   | <b>34%</b> | <b>21</b>     | <b>31%</b> | <b>69</b> | <b>34%</b> |
| <b>Ideological Beliefs:</b>                   |          |            |             |            |           |            |             |            |               |            |           |            |
| Through R.S.S.                                |          | 0%         |             | 0%         |           | 0%         |             | 0%         | 10            | 15%        | 10        | 5%         |
| Leftist Ideology                              |          | 0%         |             | 0%         |           | 0%         | 5           | 11%        | 2             | 3%         | 7         | 3%         |
| <b>Sub-total:</b>                             | <b>0</b> | <b>0%</b>  | <b>0</b>    | <b>0%</b>  | <b>0</b>  | <b>0%</b>  | <b>5</b>    | <b>11%</b> | <b>12</b>     | <b>18%</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>8%</b>  |
| <b>Political and Non-political Movements:</b> |          |            |             |            |           |            |             |            |               |            |           |            |
| Pre-independence National Movement            |          | 0%         | 2           | 5%         | 1         | 3%         | 1           | 2%         | 3             | 4%         | 7         | 3%         |
| Thru' Trade Union                             |          | 0%         |             | 0%         |           | 0%         | 5           | 11%        | 1             | 1%         | 6         | 3%         |
| Anti Hindi Agitation                          |          | 0%         |             | 0%         | 2         | 5%         |             | 0%         |               | 0%         | 2         | 1%         |
| Peasant Movement                              |          | 0%         |             | 0%         |           | 0%         | 1           | 2%         | 1             | 1%         | 2         | 1%         |
| <b>Sub-total:</b>                             | <b>0</b> | <b>0%</b>  | <b>2</b>    | <b>5%</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>8%</b>  | <b>7</b>    | <b>15%</b> | <b>5</b>      | <b>6%</b>  | <b>17</b> | <b>8%</b>  |
| Other                                         | 3        | 20%        | 4           | 10%        | 3         | 8%         | 6           | 13%        | 9             | 13%        | 25        | 12%        |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

The majority of Haryana MLAs (40%) were non-committal in the sense that they said that they were personally motivated and were not influenced by any extraneous factor. The two opposite ways of looking at this information would be 'Altruistic' motivations, which we term "contributory" and 'Selfish' motivations which may be termed "exploitative".<sup>3</sup> The impression Haryana MLAs conveyed - and the leaning was towards the latter term - is that they saw good prospects in politics. This gives

<sup>3</sup> We borrow these terms from Wahlke et al., who use them to classify legislative career goals of their sample - *The Legislative System..* op. cit. Ch. 5, p.113

some credence to the oft repeated allegation that politics appears to have become a *profitable occupation*.<sup>4</sup> A further one-fifth stated that they entered politics for 'social service', though there was generally no definition of 'social service'. Some said that they wanted to help society, others the poor, and yet others talked of helping people resolve their problems with police and administration. A large 60% can be grouped under this "personal disposition". A further fifth said that they chose politics because of family political background. Most Haryana MLAs were therefore covered under the first two categories. There was 'nil' response to either ideology or political and other movements.

In Maharashtra the largest proportion (24%) reported 'social service' as their main motivation for having entered politics, again with only a vague notion of what social service actually meant. There were exceptions as one legislator explained at length the problems of an under-privileged group in his constituency and how he had devoted most of his time to helping them:

Come to my constituency and I will show you how people have to live. They are human-beings but animals have a better life than them. I am with them but our administration doesn't care at all.

In contrast to Haryana, only 10% of Maharashtra MLAs said that they were self-motivated. The two, 'self-motivation' and 'social service', together accounted for one-third. The addition of the small proportion who said that they were moved by the oppression and poverty they saw in rural areas, accounted for about two-fifths who were grouped under the *Personal Dispositions* category. 17% were motivated by a leader and 12% said that they entered politics due to their family background, indicating that families with some political awareness and political activity are likely to engender political orientation at a relatively early stage in life. A further 17%

---

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, *India Today* (May 31, 1984) pp. 76-79 and a special feature in the issue dated April 30, 1991, pp. 52-58

responded that they contested the legislative assembly elections only because the party or the people of their constituency insisted that they do so. The largest proportion of Maharashtra MLAs was therefore in the Family/Group/Leader (hereafter 'FGL') Influence category.

Tamilnadu presented a mixed picture although the personal motivation category still accounted for most (37%) of the MLAs. 'Social service' was stated by 13%, taking the proportion under *Personal Dispositions* category to over one-half (55%) of Tamilnadu MLAs. About one-sixth (16%) of MLAs were motivated by a leader - particularly "their" leader (which in the case of the ruling DMK was Karunanidhi, and for AIADMK it was the late M G Ramachandran (MGR). This indicates the power of charismatic personalities in Tamilnadu. The state has a culture of adulation for its contemporary heroes.<sup>5</sup> This contrasts with Maharashtra where, though 17% said that they were motivated by a leader, the leaders in question were all from India's moral past. 13% of Tamilnadu MLAs came into politics because of their family's political background, taking the proportion under 'FGL' Influence category to 29%.

West Bengal had an unusually high ratio of MLAs (27%) who joined politics due to the political background of their families. The addition of a small proportion who responded that they were motivated by a leader provided us with 34% who were grouped under the 'FGL' Influence category. The next largest single group said they were moved by the considerable oppression and poverty around them in rural surroundings (17%). Response under 'self-motivation' and 'social service' being marginal, the proportion under the *Personal Dispositions* group was 25%. Despite the

---

<sup>5</sup> See Sara Dickey, 'The Politics of Adulation in South India' in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.52, No.2, May 1993

fact that the Left Front had a large majority in the state assembly and therefore it dominated our sample, only 11% of the total sample responded that they entered politics due to their belief in leftist ideology. This entire proportion was made up from the ranks of CPI(M), the dominant Left-front partner, constituting 18% of their own numbers in our sample. Those, from CPI(M), who said that they were influenced by their family background were a shade higher at 22%. These data would support the view that CPI(M) is a party dominated by the *bhadralok*.<sup>6</sup> One-sixth of the West Bengal MLAs had a background of socio-political movements, but only a marginal 2% having participated in any peasant movement - a further pointer towards CPI(M)'s political strategy which was built around rural but generally non-agriculturist support (Chapter III).

In Uttar Pradesh 17% stated that they entered politics because they saw a high degree of oppression and poverty around them. As in West Bengal, there were only a few who responded 'self-motivation' or 'social service'. Accordingly, the proportion under the first category of *Personal Disposition* was also more in line with West Bengal's 25% than elsewhere (41% to 60%). Uttar Pradesh had the highest proportion among all states under *Ideology* as 15% of its MLAs came through RSS, not entirely unexpected, as BJP were the ruling party with a majority in the assembly. A further 15% came into politics because of their family background and 12% said that they were motivated by a leader. Here too we saw a contrast with Maharashtra as most UP MLAs referred to Charan Singh, the leader of middle peasantry from Western Uttar Pradesh.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> An urban, landed and English-educated elite. See Chapter III.

<sup>7</sup> For information on Charan Singh, see footnote 9

Overall, in Haryana and Tamilnadu, the majority was grouped under the *Personal Disposition* category, most MLAs claiming ‘self-motivation’. We got a distinct impression that their leaning was towards the ‘selfish-exploitative’ classification rather than altruism. Maharashtra contrasted with Tamilnadu and Uttar Pradesh in the fact that in the former those motivated by a leader referred to India’s moral past, while the latter were referring to their immediate or recent leaders.

The highest proportion of MLAs (17%) became politicians because of their particular family’s political background. The proportion under “ideology” or “political movements” was generally low, if not non-existent, in the five states.

#### **Motivation to join politics (Party-wise)**

The party-wise data are given below in table IV.2.

**Table IV.2**  
**Motivation to Join Politics**  
**(Party-wise)**

| REASON                                        | Cong.I    |            | CPI(M)   |            | BJP       |            | DMK       |            | Janata Dal |            | Total     |            |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                                               | No.       | %          | No.      | %          | No.       | %          | No.       | %          | No.        | %          | No.       | %          |
| <b>Personal Disposition:</b>                  |           |            |          |            |           |            |           |            |            |            |           |            |
| Self-Motivation                               | 7         | 13%        | 2        | 6%         | 4         | 10%        | 7         | 37%        | 6          | 16%        | 26        | 14%        |
| For Social Service                            | 8         | 15%        | 2        | 6%         | 3         | 8%         | 2         | 11%        | 6          | 16%        | 21        | 12%        |
| Saw Oppression and Poverty Around             | 2         | 4%         | 5        | 15%        | 4         | 10%        | 1         | 5%         | 6          | 16%        | 18        | 10%        |
| <b>Sub-total:</b>                             | <b>17</b> | <b>32%</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>27%</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>28%</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>53%</b> | <b>18</b>  | <b>48%</b> | <b>65</b> | <b>36%</b> |
| <b>Family/Group/Leader Influence:</b>         |           |            |          |            |           |            |           |            |            |            |           |            |
| Family Background                             | 19        | 37%        | 6        | 18%        | 4         | 10%        | 1         | 5%         | 2          | 5%         | 32        | 18%        |
| Motivated by a Leader                         | 6         | 12%        | 1        | 3%         | 3         | 8%         | 5         | 26%        | 7          | 19%        | 22        | 12%        |
| Party and/or People Insisted                  | 2         | 4%         |          | 0%         | 3         | 8%         |           | 0%         | 1          | 3%         | 6         | 3%         |
| <b>Sub-total:</b>                             | <b>27</b> | <b>53%</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>21%</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>26%</b> | <b>6</b>  | <b>31%</b> | <b>10</b>  | <b>27%</b> | <b>60</b> | <b>33%</b> |
| <b>Ideological Beliefs:</b>                   |           |            |          |            |           |            |           |            |            |            |           |            |
| Through R.S.S.                                |           | 0%         |          | 0%         | 10        | 26%        |           | 0%         |            | 0%         | 10        | 6%         |
| Leftist Ideology                              |           | 0%         | 5        | 15%        |           | 0%         |           | 0%         | 1          | 3%         | 6         | 3%         |
| <b>Sub-total:</b>                             | <b>0</b>  | <b>0%</b>  | <b>5</b> | <b>15%</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>26%</b> | <b>0</b>  | <b>0%</b>  | <b>1</b>   | <b>3%</b>  | <b>16</b> | <b>9%</b>  |
| <b>Political and Non-political Movements:</b> |           |            |          |            |           |            |           |            |            |            |           |            |
| Pre-independence National Movement            | 4         | 8%         | 1        | 3%         | 1         | 3%         |           | 0%         | 1          | 3%         | 7         | 4%         |
| Thru' Trade Union                             |           | 0%         | 5        | 15%        | 1         | 3%         |           | 0%         |            | 0%         | 6         | 3%         |
| Anti Hindi Agitation                          |           | 0%         |          | 0%         |           | 0%         | 1         | 5%         |            | 0%         | 1         | 1%         |
| Peasant Movement                              |           | 0%         | 1        | 3%         |           | 0%         |           | 0%         | 1          | 3%         | 2         | 1%         |
| <b>Sub-total:</b>                             | <b>4</b>  | <b>8%</b>  | <b>7</b> | <b>21%</b> | <b>2</b>  | <b>6%</b>  | <b>1</b>  | <b>5%</b>  | <b>2</b>   | <b>6%</b>  | <b>16</b> | <b>9%</b>  |
| Other                                         | 4         | 8%         | 5        | 15%        | 6         | 15%        | 2         | 11%        | 6          | 16%        | 23        | 13%        |

Note: N = Cong.I 52, CPI(M) 33, BJP 39, DMK 19, Janata Dal 37, and Total 180.

In Cong.I, 53% of MLAs were under the 'FGL' Influence category including 37%, the highest among all parties, who entered politics due to their family background. The one possible, though not necessary, negative connotation of this is that political culture tends to get corrupted over a period of time as political positions are offered based on family connections rather than on an objective assessment of the candidate. 'Self-motivation' and 'Social service' accounted for 13% and 15% respectively, taking the total under *Personal Disposition* to one-third of the Cong.I sample.

The *bhadralok* characteristics meant that CPI(M)'s highest proportion of legislators (18%) became politicians due to their family background. The ratio was not as large as the Cong.I's 37%, but 18% was a significant proportion. Unlike the other parties, CPI(M) MLAs were generally spread over the four categories. Apart from 27% in the *Personal disposition* category, one-sixth each responded 'leftist ideology'(15%) and 'trade union movement'(15%), the latter being almost non-existent in other parties.

In BJP, not surprisingly, the highest proportion had a background of RSS activity - 26% were classified under this category. 'Family background' was only 10%. This illustrates that most BJP MLAs came from non-political middle-class families, the targets of RSS ideology.<sup>8</sup>

The majority of MLAs (37%) from DMK responded 'self-motivation'. Another 11% stated that they were motivated by their desire for 'social service'. A majority of DMK MLAs (53%) therefore came under the category of *Personal Dispositions*. The next highest proportion (26%) of MLAs were motivated by the leader of their party, namely Karunanidhi. All MLAs who responded in this fashion referred to Karunanidhi as "my leader", indicating a perceived personal equation and loyalty to him. This is by far the highest from among the parties. The bulk of DMK MLAs fell into the first two categories, while ideology had 'nil' response.

Janata Dal response was also split between the first two categories; 36% under *Personal Dispositions* and 33% under 'FGL' Influence. Within these two categories, the maximum proportion (19%) stated that were influenced by a leader. In this case,

---

<sup>8</sup> See B D Graham, *Hindu Nationalism..* op.cit.



however, it was not the immediate party leadership. Several MLAs (irrespective of their current affiliation to any of the factions of Janata Dal) took the name of Charan Singh reverently and remarked that he had motivated them to enter politics.<sup>9</sup> A significant proportion of 16% each were either motivated personally without any extraneous factors or by their desire for 'social service'.

Overall, for our five parties, we find that more MLAs became politicians due to family political background especially in Cong.I. DMK led others in 'self-motivation' and influence of a 'leader'. All parties scored low where involvement in any socio-political 'movement' was concerned, indicating that political participation at interest-group level is still low in Indian states.

#### **BACKGROUND OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

We have observed in Chapter III that MLAs are not an assortment of average citizens: they are better educated, have higher status, and often privileged backgrounds. But these attributes alone are not enough to ensure their political recruitment by various political parties. Political recruitment is intricately linked with the structure of the political system and the dominant political culture, both of which diverge among Indian states.

However, even within the framework of different political cultures, one factor is common. Most legislators are politically active well before they are elected to the Assembly. People do not just become legislators. Mathews argues that becoming a

---

<sup>9</sup> Charan Singh was the founder of BKD (Bhartiya Kranti Dal) which he formed after leaving Congress in 1969. He represented the interests of the middle-peasant castes mainly North Indian farmers. During the brief post-Emergency Janata rule, he was initially Dy. Prime Minister and later Prime Minister of India. For a review of his remarkable agrarian politics, see Paul Brass, 'Division in the Congress and the Rise of Agrarian Interests and Issues in Uttar Pradesh' in John R Wood (Ed.) *State Politics in India: Crisis or Continuity*, op. cit.

legislator is a “lengthy process, with several stages, the last of which is some kind of popular election”.<sup>10</sup> Invariably, one of the stages is becoming ‘politically active’.

Our investigation of the background of political activities of our sample highlights the different political cultures and recruitment patterns in the five states and five parties in our study. The data are presented in table IV.3 below:

**Table IV.3**  
**Political Background of MLAs**

| Background of Political Activity | Haryana |     | Maharashtra |     | West Bengal |     | Tamilnadu |     | Uttar Pradesh |     | Total |     |
|----------------------------------|---------|-----|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|---------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                                  | No.     | %   | No.         | %   | No.         | %   | No.       | %   | No.           | %   | No.   | %   |
| Party Orgn. Position             | 11      | 73% | 14          | 33% | 27          | 60% | 24        | 63% | 26            | 39% | 102   | 49% |
| Panchayat Position               | 5       | 33% | 12          | 29% | 15          | 33% | 8         | 21% | 3             | 4%  | 43    | 21% |
| Peasant activity                 | 2       | 13% | 2           | 5%  | 15          | 33% | 4         | 11% | 19            | 28% | 42    | 20% |
| Student Activity                 | 2       | 13% | 14          | 33% | 16          | 36% | 17        | 45% | 23            | 34% | 72    | 35% |
| Youth Wing activity              | 2       | 13% | 2           | 5%  | 4           | 9%  | 6         | 16% | 5             | 7%  | 19    | 9%  |
| Municipal Activity               | 1       | 7%  | 8           | 19% |             | 0%  | 5         | 13% | 1             | 1%  | 15    | 7%  |
| Trade Union activity             | 1       | 7%  | 3           | 7%  | 13          | 29% | 9         | 24% | 5             | 7%  | 31    | 15% |
| Social Service                   |         | 0%  | 0           | 0%  |             | 0%  |           | 0%  | 5             | 7%  | 5     | 2%  |
| Other                            | 3       | 20% | 2           | 5%  | 1           | 2%  | 4         | 11% | 17            | 25% | 27    | 13% |
| None                             | 2       | 13% | 8           | 19% |             | 0%  | 2         | 5%  | 4             | 6%  | 16    | 8%  |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response

A majority of Haryana MLAs were involved with Party Organisational Activity (73%), equally in the ruling party (Janata Dal) and the opposition. Gaining a party ticket to contest election needed involvement in party organisation and activity. Haryana is primarily agriculturist and though a majority of MLAs listed agriculture as their main profession, few had any background of Peasant political activity. A plausible reason is that politics in Haryana is conducted on the basis of caste

<sup>10</sup> Donald R Mathews, ‘Legislative Recruitment and Legislative Careers’ in Gerhard Loewenburg et al. (Eds.) *Handbook of Legislative Research* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985) pp.17-43

Generally, it is caste that plays a dominant part in electoral calculations and the caste card is played by all parties.<sup>11</sup> In order to be a representative of the peasant community one does not have to be active in their midst; to belong to the 'right' caste meets the criterion. However, one-third held some panchayat position before becoming MLAs. This emphasises the rural character of Haryana MLAs, despite the fact that many have moved into urban residences.

In Maharashtra again party organisational background accounted for the largest proportion (33%) of MLAs, though not even half of Haryana's 73%. A third had a background of student political activity. It suggests that aspiring politicians work towards their goal from an early stage. It also suggests that political parties battle for the hearts and minds of students on campus through campaigns and student union elections.<sup>12</sup> The next highest proportion (29%) had a background of Panchayat position and 19% of Municipal activity. These political activities generally cut across party lines. Curiously, 19% of MLAs had no previous background of any form of formal or recorded political activity and this also cut across parties.

In West Bengal, again party organisational position (60%) dominated the political background of MLAs: 78% of the Left-front and 56% of the opposition. In keeping with the rural characteristics of the West Bengal MLAs, 33% had a background of peasant activity (39% of ruling Left-front, 11% of opposition), and an equal proportion had held a panchayat position (across party lines). A comparatively large

---

<sup>11</sup> See Ranbir Singh, 'A Contest in the Hindi Belt: A Study of Haryana' in Subrata Mitra and J Chiriyankandath (Eds.), *Electoral Politics in India: A Changing Landscape* (New Delhi: Segment Books, 1993)

<sup>12</sup> Almost all parties have their student and youth wings active on the campuses. The attempt is to capture student unions. For example, BJP has Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarthi Parishad, and CPI(M) has Student Federation of India, Cong.I is aligned with several state-level unions. See, S C Hazary, *Student Politics in India* (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing, 1987)

proportion (36%) had a background of student activity and 29% reported trade union activity, the latter comprising 33% of ruling left-front MLAs and only 11% of the opposition. This information is in keeping with the leftist ideology of the CPI(M) in West Bengal.

Tamilnadu displayed similar characteristics to West Bengal in Party organisational position (63%), Student activity (45%), and Trade union activity (24%). In relation to peasant activity or panchayat position it was much lower at 11% and 21% than West Bengal. We can see the difference in the characteristics of states dominated by specific ideology/regional parties compared to the states which are dominated by national level “centrist” parties. Regional party dominated states have a higher proportion of legislators who have held a position in their respective party organisations, whereas this is not such an important criteria for the states dominated by centrist or non-specific ideology political parties. In the former case, candidates who have a track record with the party are given electoral preference.

In the case of Uttar Pradesh, the urban characteristics are striking: only 4% of our sample had any panchayat background although the state is 80% rural. Party organisational position (39%) remained the major political background for most candidates irrespective of party affiliation, but it was considerably less than in West Bengal and Tamilnadu and more in line with Maharashtra. One-third of the sample in Uttar Pradesh had a background of student activity, indicating early political orientation of a significant proportion of its MLAs. Normally one would link it to the ruling BJP with its link to RSS concentration on urban youth lower middle-class areas of cities, but the background of Student activity cut across party lines in UP. Peasant activity at 28% was biased towards the opposition parties (73% of this group, compared to 15% of ruling BJP).

Overall, the largest proportion (49%) had held a Party organisational position especially in Haryana, Tamilnadu, and West Bengal. Student activity (35%) followed at some distance though Haryana (11%) was the exception. The mainly rural-oriented political backgrounds of Panchayat position and Peasant activity had 21% and 20% respectively; West Bengal was the clear leader here.

### Background of Political Activity (Party-wise)

The party-wise data are presented in table IV.4 below:

**Table IV.4**  
**Political background of MLAs**  
**(Party-wise)**

| Background of Political Activity | Cong.I |     | CPI(M) |     | BJP |     | DMK |     | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|----------------------------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                                  | No.    | %   | No.    | %   | No. | %   | No. | %   | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| Party Orgn. Position             | 29     | 56% | 20     | 61% | 19  | 49% | 11  | 58% | 14         | 38% | 93    | 52% |
| Panchayat Position               | 16     | 31% | 11     | 33% | 4   | 10% | 2   | 11% | 7          | 19% | 40    | 22% |
| Peasant Activity                 | 5      | 10% | 9      | 27% | 6   | 15% | 1   | 5%  | 12         | 32% | 33    | 18% |
| Student Activity                 | 22     | 42% | 10     | 30% | 10  | 26% | 7   | 37% | 15         | 41% | 64    | 36% |
| Youth Wing Activity              | 10     | 19% | 1      | 3%  | 1   | 3%  | 2   | 11% | 4          | 11% | 18    | 10% |
| Municipal Activity               | 4      | 8%  | 1      | 3%  | 3   | 8%  | 4   | 21% | 1          | 3%  | 13    | 7%  |
| Trade Union Activity             | 3      | 6%  | 11     | 33% | 2   | 5%  | 5   | 26% | 4          | 11% | 25    | 14% |
| Social Service                   |        | 0%  |        | 0%  | 3   | 8%  |     | 0%  | 1          | 3%  | 4     | 2%  |
| Other                            | 3      | 6%  | 3      | 9%  | 11  | 28% | 1   | 5%  | 6          | 16% | 24    | 13% |
| None                             | 6      | 12% |        | 0%  | 3   | 8%  | 1   | 5%  | 1          | 3%  | 11    | 6%  |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; JANATA 37; and TOTAL 180.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response

Party organisational background accounted for a majority (56%) of the Cong.I MLAs. Clearly the path to a party candidacy was involvement in organisation and activity. We found that 42% of the MLAs had a background of Student activity and a further 19% had a background of Youth-wing activity. Combining the two (excluding duplicates) accounts for half of MLAs: Cong.I recruits young. The absence of ideology among Cong.I MLAs could suggest opportunism. A third of Cong.I MLAs

had a Panchayat background emphasizing rural aspects of the party's representation. Combining Peasant activity with the above increases this proportion only marginally.

In the CPI(M), Party organisational position (61 %) dominated even more the political background of its MLAs. In keeping with its rural characteristics, 33 % had a background of Panchayat position and a further 27 % had a background of Peasant activity. Together they accounted for 54 % of MLAs from CPI(M). Trade union activity (33 %) was well up on other parties but less than might be expected in a Marxist party. Student and Youth-wing activity accounted for 30 %.

In BJP, although 49 % of MLAs were involved in Party organisational work, this ratio was the lowest among cadre based parties i.e., CPI(M), DMK, and BJP. However, if we add those who had an RSS activist background, we get a proportion of 56 % in keeping with Bruce Graham's findings.<sup>13</sup> The next highest at 26 % was Student activity. The urban characteristics of the BJP candidates are clear: only 10 % of its MLAs had any background of Panchayat and 15 % had some background of Peasant activity. Combining the two, the total is 23 %. This compares with the CPI(M) at 33 % and 27 % (total 54 %), and Janata Dal at 19 % and 32 % (total 43 %). This may well be a potential weakness for BJP so far as electoral politics is concerned. About one-quarter of the BJP MLAs had a background of having been active RSS members, mostly from their student days.

DMK displayed similar characteristics to CPI(M) in Party organisational position (58 %). Student activity was the next at 37 %, and Trade union activity followed at 26 %. The unique DMK characteristic was that 21 % had a background of Municipal

---

<sup>13</sup> Bruce Graham, *Hindu Nationalism...* op. cit.

activity. This was by far the highest proportion from among our sample of political parties, the second position was occupied jointly by BJP and Cong.I at 8% each. Some MLAs explained that DMK was dominated at local levels by lumpen elements who exercised their muscle power to win local elections. As anonymity is difficult to maintain in local polling, most voters were obliged to vote for DMK.<sup>14</sup> Rural-oriented activity is, in any case, low in Tamilnadu but since DMK is mainly present in urban and semi-urban centres, Peasant activity and Panchayat position are much lower at 5% and 11%, adding up to 16%, contrasting with CPI(M)'s 54%. This was the lowest total of rural oriented activity in our sample.

A majority of Janata Dal MLAs were involved with Student activity (41%). Including Youth-wing activity this proportion increased to 46%. Next was Party organisational work at 38%. The agricultural bias of the party was seen in the fact that 32% of its MLAs had a background of Peasant activity and 19% had a Panchayat background, making a total of 43%.

Some trends emerged in relation to the composition of these political parties. On Party organisational activity CPI(M) ranked the first with 61%, DMK and Cong.I followed closely with 58% and 56% respectively. If we combine Panchayat position with Peasant activity to view the rural orientation of each party, CPI(M) again leads with 54%. However, CPI(M) is rural but not agriculturist (See Chapter III). Janata Dal and Cong.I followed at 43% and 33%. The last was DMK with just 16% of its legislators having any such background. In Student and Youth-wing activities indicating an orientation towards the younger groups, Cong.I ranked first with 48%,

---

<sup>14</sup> This was also emphasised by the chief political reporter of *The Hindu*, Madras, in my interview with him.

Janata Dal (a daughter, so to say, of Cong.I) a close second at 46%. Third position was DMK at 37%.

### CHANGING POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS

In recent years one of the characteristics of the Indian political scene has been the frequency with which politicians have changed their political affiliations. It has not been entirely uncommon to find the same legislator changing his party from election to election and even between elections. These 'defections' have influenced political debate in India because of allegations that political parties, particularly the Cong.I, have used money and ministerial positions as a lure to attract legislators from opposition.<sup>15</sup> During Rajiv Gandhi's premiership an anti-defection law was framed, under which individual legislators could not 'defect', but a group, if it comprised a third of the Party's strength in the legislature, could 'defect'. Critics have stated that individual defection has now given way to collective defection. The problem has certainly not gone away, though the 'incentives' offered to defectors may have gone up.<sup>16</sup>

We tried to ascertain the dimensions of this phenomenon within the states covered by our study. The data are presented in table IV.5 below:

---

<sup>15</sup> Certainly the centrist parties have played this game. A case study of 750 defectors showed that one in five was rewarded with a ministership or appointment of Parliamentary Secretary; cited in J R Siwach, *Dynamics of Indian Government and Politics*, Second Revised Edition (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1990) p. 641

<sup>16</sup> For an interesting analysis of defections, both at Centre and state-levels, see Kanan Gahrana, 'Parliamentary System and Unitarianism in India: Is a Systemic Change Needed' in *Journal of Political Science* Vol.L1, No.3, July-Sept., 1990.



**Table IV.5**  
**Number of MLAs who changed Party Affiliation**  
**one or more times during their career**

| STATE         | Changed once | %          | Twice or more | %          | Did not change | %          |
|---------------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| Haryana       | 2            | 13%        | 6             | 40%        | 7              | 47%        |
| Maharashtra   | 8            | 19%        | 2             | 5%         | 32             | 76%        |
| Tamilnadu     | 2            | 5%         | 1             | 3%         | 35             | 92%        |
| West Bengal   | 3            | 7%         | 0             | 0%         | 42             | 93%        |
| Uttar Pradesh | 13           | 19%        | 19            | 28%        | 35             | 52%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>28</b>    | <b>14%</b> | <b>28</b>     | <b>14%</b> | <b>151</b>     | <b>73%</b> |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

Haryana and Uttar Pradesh had the highest incidence of MLAs changing their party affiliations. In Haryana 40% of the MLAs had changed their party affiliation twice or more in their political career thus far, and a further 13% had changed once - making a total of 53% who had changed affiliation at least once. In terms of the parties, in Haryana all MLAs who had changed party affiliation belonged to Janata Party and its various offshoots. In contrast to this behaviour, 73% of Sharma's sample of Haryana MLAs had responded that legislators had no right to change parties. Almost two-thirds had stated that curbing defection by law was appropriate.<sup>17</sup> This exposes the gap between intention and actual action, the latter being imposed by compulsions of the political culture in the state.

Uttar Pradesh had a similar high incidence of changes in political affiliations: 28% changing party twice or more, and a further 13% at least once. This took the total of MLAs who changed at least once to 41%. Again, the main political party involved was Janata Dal which had further split into three factions. Cong.I followed Janata Dal in the number of MLAs changing party.

---

<sup>17</sup> P D Sharma, *The Legislative Elite*, op.cit., p. 151

The next state in the order of number of MLAs changing political affiliation was Maharashtra but the proportion of MLAs was down to 24%, of whom 19% had changed once and 5% twice or more. The majority of changes here were related to the post-Emergency split in the Congress party.<sup>18</sup>

The states of Tamilnadu and West Bengal demonstrated extremely limited characteristics of MLAs changing their political parties. In Tamilnadu only 5% had changed their party once and 3% had changed it twice or more making a total of only 8% under this category. In West Bengal, there were only 7% MLAs who had changed their party once, and the balance of 93% had never changed.

### Changing Political Affiliations (Party-wise)

The above analysis already points to a certain party-wise concentration of this phenomenon. The party-wise data are presented in table IV.6 below:

**Table IV.6**  
**Number of MLAs who changed Party Affiliation**  
**once or more times during their career**  
**(Party-wise)**

| <b>PARTY</b> | <b>Changed once</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>Changed twice or more</b> | <b>%</b>  | <b>Did not change</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|--------------|---------------------|------------|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|
| Cong.I       | 3                   | 6%         | 3                            | 6%        | 46                    | 88%        |
| CPI(M)       | 1                   | 3%         | 0                            | 0%        | 32                    | 97%        |
| BJP          | 7                   | 18%        | 2                            | 5%        | 30                    | 77%        |
| DMK          | 1                   | 5%         | 0                            | 0%        | 18                    | 95%        |
| Janata Dal   | 24                  | 65%        | 2                            | 5%        | 11                    | 30%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>36</b>           | <b>20%</b> | <b>7</b>                     | <b>4%</b> | <b>137</b>            | <b>76%</b> |

**Note 1** : It ignores changes from Congress to Cong(U), Cong(S) or CFD and then back to Cong.I

**Note 2** : The merger of BKD, Lokdal, Socialists into Janata Dal ignored as it was not a change of party  
N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; JANATA 37; and TOTAL 180.

<sup>18</sup> When Mrs. Gandhi announced elections in 1977 to end the internal Emergency, Jagjivan Ram a well known Scheduled Caste leader broke away from the party and founded a new party, 'Congress for Democracy'. Several Cong.I politicians joined him. CFD became an unsuccessful partner in the Janata alliance which came together against Cong.I.

The main party that stood out in its incidence of MLAs changing their party affiliations was Janata Dal. As many as 65% of its MLAs had changed their political party at least once and a further 5% had changed twice or more, making a total of 70% who had changed affiliation. In calculating this ratio we ignored those MLAs who changed party only due to the merger of their respective parties such as BKD, Lok Dal, and Socialist Party into Janata Party and then Janata Dal. This is by far the highest proportion among the five parties. Second was BJP with 23% and third Cong.I with only 12%. In the case of Cong.I we ignored those MLAs who changed from one faction of Congress to another due to a merger of the two factions. The specifically cadre-based parties namely CPI(M) and DMK had a negligible incidence of this changing loyalty.

## V. CONSTITUENCY ISSUES

Most legislators perceive *representing their constituency* as one of their important roles/functions (see Chapter II). In the case of developing societies, this representative focus assumes greater importance because it is almost always closely linked to the re-election prospects of the legislators. The focus of representation in the case of Indian MLAs is their constituency and their party.<sup>1</sup>

The constituency focus of MLAs is two-fold. Its territorial aspect (Wahlke's *Areal Roles*) is one, but the second, revolving around individual constituents as emphasized by Kornberg's *delegate servants* or Gerlich's *errand boy*, is more important for Indian MLAs.<sup>2</sup> Most MLAs, if not resident in their constituency, visit it regularly in their attempt to keep in close touch with their constituents.

In this chapter we investigate this latter aspect through an appraisal of the visitors received by MLAs. We also examine whether state governments consider the job of MLAs important enough to support them with any organisational help.

### MLAs and their Constituents

In some societies, legislators have to canvass for people to bring them their problems. For example, in the United States, Congressmen routinely resort to direct mail campaigns to ask their constituents to bring them their problems.<sup>3</sup> In India the conditions are reversed. Public and private issues are not differentiated in the

---

<sup>1</sup> See Chapters II and VII

<sup>2</sup> This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter VII, Role Perception of MLAs.

<sup>3</sup> Gerhard Loewenberg and Samuel Patterson, *Comparing Legislatures* op. cit., p. 187

developing world. When people need help they go to their legislator. Thus there are cases when legislators have to mediate even in family matters,<sup>4</sup> or obtain benefits for constituents even by charging a 'commission'.<sup>5</sup> Many MLAs from our sample stated that people came to them with family problems and expected them to mediate. This was particularly true of rural MLAs. Given this general culture, it is obvious that in developing societies legislators will always have a constant stream of visitors.

In India it has now become a part of state-level political culture to see MLAs overwhelmed by supplicants. Obviously it is not unusual that constituents go to visit their MLA, but it is the numbers that state-level legislators attract that are unusual. It is quite common to find many MLAs receiving well over a hundred visitors on each day that they are in their constituencies.

Although not all visitors have specific work with the MLA, they crowd his residence and office anyway. The number of people who visit MLAs is partly dependent on the political culture of the particular state and its ruling party. It is also influenced by whether the MLA lives in a rural or an urban area (see below). In addition, ruling party MLAs generally receive a higher number of visitors than opposition MLAs.

Data relating to estimated daily visitors received by MLAs in different states are presented in table V.1 below:

---

<sup>4</sup> Michael Mezey, 'Third World Legislatures' in Gerhard Loewenberg et al. (Eds.), *Handbook of Legislative Research* op. cit. p. 743

<sup>5</sup> Marvin Weinbaum, 'The Legislator As Intermediary..' in Albert A Eldridge (Ed.) *Legislatures in Plural Societies* op. cit., pp. 110-14

**Table V.1**  
**Estimated average daily**  
**visitors while in Constituency**

| STATE         | Upto<br>20 | %   | 20-50 | %   | 50-100 | %   | 100-150 | %   | Over<br>150 | %   |
|---------------|------------|-----|-------|-----|--------|-----|---------|-----|-------------|-----|
| Haryana       | 7          | 47% | 5     | 33% | 0      | 0%  | 3       | 20% | 0           | 0%  |
| Maharashtra   | 5          | 12% | 15    | 36% | 3      | 7%  | 14      | 33% | 5           | 12% |
| Tamilnadu     | 5          | 13% | 15    | 39% | 0      | 0%  | 14      | 37% | 4           | 11% |
| West Bengal   | 19         | 42% | 12    | 27% | 12     | 27% | 2       | 4%  | 0           | 0%  |
| Uttar Pradesh | 4          | 6%  | 18    | 27% | 18     | 27% | 10      | 15% | 17          | 25% |
| Total         | 40         | 19% | 65    | 31% | 33     | 16% | 43      | 21% | 26          | 13% |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, the number of visitors received by MLAs was not as high as elsewhere: 47% received less than 20 visitors a day on average. One-third received between 20 and 50. MLAs with urban residence received most visitors, clearly linked to requests for employment as well as to population pressure. (Residence-wise information is provided in table V.3 below). The average visitors for a ruling party MLA in Haryana were 48 compared to 38 for the opposition. We created an index of visitors by assigning a weight of 5 to the number of MLAs who reported average visitors of over 150, 4 to between 100 and 150, 3 to between 50 and 100, 2 to between 20 and 50, and 1 to those who reported an average of fewer than 20 visitors. The sum of these weighted numbers was then divided by the number of MLAs from the state. Based on this, Haryana had a visitors' index of 1.93<sup>6</sup>

What are the nature of requests that are made to the MLAs? Iqbal Narain and Shashi Lata Puri, from their study of MLAs in Rajasthan, suggest that the prime role of MLAs is developmental. In other words, 'pork-barrel' activity dominates the work

---

<sup>6</sup> In Haryana, for example, the formula works as follows: MLAs reporting less than 20 visitors multiplied by 1 (7 x 1 = 7), 20 - 50 multiplied by 2 (5 x 2 = 10), 50 - 100 multiplied by 3 (0 x 3 = 0), 100 - 150 multiplied by 4 (3 x 4 = 12), and, over 150 multiplied by 5 (0 x 5 = 0). The sum of the weighted values is 7+10+12 = 29. This divided by the number of MLAs in our sample from Haryana (29 ÷ 15) gives us the index of 1.93.

of MLAs.<sup>7</sup> If so, the requests from an MLA's constituency should be reflective of the same. We are unable to comment if this is indeed the case in Rajasthan, but the Haryana evidence contradicts this. An overwhelming 94 % of the MLAs interviewed in Haryana reported that visitors' petitions were 'mainly personal' in nature, recommendations for employment, transfers, and help in resolving police cases. In rural areas it also included matters relating to land affairs and land revenue. This was true for the ruling party as well as for the opposition. Data regarding the nature of requests received by MLAs are presented below in table V.2 below:

**Table V.2**  
**Type of Requests made by the Constituents**

| Type of Requests    | Haryana   |             | Maharashtra |             | Tamilnadu |             | West Bengal |             | Uttar Pradesh |             | Total      |             |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
|                     | No.       | %           | No.         | %           | No.       | %           | No.         | %           | No.           | %           | No.        | %           |
| Nearly all Personal | 4         | 27 %        | 2           | 5 %         | 4         | 11 %        | 2           | 4 %         | 9             | 13 %        | 21         | 10 %        |
| Mostly Personal     | 10        | 67 %        | 17          | 40 %        | 15        | 39 %        | 24          | 53 %        | 23            | 34 %        | 89         | 43 %        |
| Police Excesses     |           |             |             |             |           |             |             |             | 22            | 33 %        | 22         | 11 %        |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>    | <b>14</b> | <b>94 %</b> | <b>19</b>   | <b>45 %</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>50 %</b> | <b>26</b>   | <b>57 %</b> | <b>54</b>     | <b>80 %</b> | <b>132</b> | <b>64 %</b> |
| Both Equal          | 1         | 7 %         | 8           | 19 %        | 7         | 18 %        | 14          | 31 %        | 5             | 7 %         | 35         | 17 %        |
| Mostly Public       |           | 0 %         | 14          | 33 %        | 12        | 32 %        | 5           | 11 %        | 8             | 12 %        | 39         | 19 %        |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

Note 2: One MLA from Maharashtra offered no comments

Not only did almost the entire number (94 %) in Haryana, state that their visitors mainly brought them personal problems, none of the MLAs mentioned 'public' problems. The "errand boy" role of Haryana MLAs is highlighted by this response.

In Maharashtra, 36 % reported 20 to 50 visitors a day (table V.1). 33 % said that they received as many as 100 to 150 visitors a day. Both categories were dominated by

---

<sup>7</sup> Iqbal Narain & Shashi Lata Puri, 'Legislators in an Indian State: A Study of Role Images and the Pattern of Constituency Linkages' in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* I, 3, August 1976.

urban MLAs. Maharashtra scored a comparatively higher **2.97** on the index of visitors, but in contrast to Haryana's 94 %, only 45 % of the respondents here said that the requests of their constituents were 'mainly personal' (table V.2). This response cut across party lines as well as rural or urban residential locales.

Significantly, one-third of Maharashtra MLAs said that the requests were 'mainly public' in nature, the highest proportion among the five states. A deeper analysis of the response of those MLAs who reported that public issues dominated their constituents' requests, revealed that a majority of them also reported that they did not encourage their constituents to come with any personal requests for running errands or obtaining favours from the administration, unless they felt that there was a clear case of discrimination or injustice against the complainant. We found a certain Gandhian strain still existing among several MLAs. They appeared to approach politics more ethically than was noticed elsewhere; but such MLAs were also frustrated by their own ineffectiveness, and it was among this group that we discerned reluctance to seek re-election (see Chapter VII).

One-fifth of MLAs in Maharashtra said that they received personal and public requests in equal proportion. Combining them with those who responded that they entertained only 'public' issues, suggests that half of state legislators in Maharashtra get requests pertaining to 'public' issues. The political culture of Maharashtra appears different to that of Haryana where politicians are expected to help fix the personal problems of their constituents. During our visits to some Haryana MLAs in their constituencies, this particular trait was confirmed. Constituents came to ask for favours which clearly contravened rules and laws. In Maharashtra, by contrast, a legislator was able to tell his constituents that he would not handle private issues, and



the message largely went through. The average visitors for a ruling party MLA in Maharashtra were 102 and for the opposition 69.

In Tamilnadu, the largest proportion of MLAs (39%) received between 20 to 50 visitors on average, followed closely (37%) by those who said that they received between 100 to 150 visitors a day (table V.1). An entirely urban 11% indicated still greater number of over 150/day. This pattern resulted in a score of **2.92** for Tamilnadu on the visitor index.

In Tamilnadu too, almost one-third of the MLAs reported that their constituents brought them only 'public' or community issues, and that they did not entertain any requests about private matters. However, a majority (50%) said that the problems brought to them by their constituents were 'mainly personal' (table V.2). When asked what kind of personal requests were brought to them, the answers remained very much linked to requests for employment and transfers. The figures cut across party lines except for the fact that the ruling party MLAs received a higher average of visitors (99) compared to the opposition (63).

In West Bengal, contrary to the trend in other states, it was rural MLAs who reported a higher number of visitors. There was one significant difference though. The number of visitors that an MLA normally received was not as high as in other states. The highest proportion of West Bengal MLAs (42%) indicated visitors of up to 20 on average (table V.1). The main reason is that people are encouraged to go to the party offices of CPI(M) with their grievances. The listening-post, in this case, is moved from the MLA to the CPI(M) party office. Nonetheless, a majority of West Bengal MLAs, mostly from the ruling party, still reported a large number of visitors with

personal problems.<sup>8</sup> West Bengal is also different in the fact that the ruling party MLAs reported an average of 51 daily visitors, while the opposition was higher at 58. West Bengal scored **1.93** on our index of visitors.

In UP, MLAs reported a generally higher number of visitors, a quarter received an average of over 150 visitors a day (table V.1). Here again, over half of this group was from urban areas. UP's score on our index of visitors was **3.26**, the highest among all our states.

Almost 80% of the MLAs in this state responded that their constituents brought them mainly personal problems (table V.2), cutting across ruling/opposition or indeed the rural/Urban divide. The one rather unique feature of UP was that a large proportion of the personal problems of people related to alleged mistreatment or bullying and terrorising by the police. These would almost certainly include cases of the middle-caste policemen bullying and exploiting lower-caste agricultural labourers and poor farmers.<sup>9</sup> Of the 80% who responded that visitors came mainly with personal problems, about 40% of MLAs stated that their constituents came to them because of 'police excesses'.

Although most of those who spoke of police excesses were from the opposition, a quarter of the MLAs within this category were from the ruling party. This substantiates the feeling that police in UP tend to be unsympathetic, corrupt, and high-handed, particularly where the economically and socially lower strata of

---

<sup>8</sup> Out of 24 MLAs who said that visitors brought mainly personal issues to them, 21 belonged to the ruling party.

<sup>9</sup> On the question of police high-handedness, specially against lower-castes, see *India Today*, February 16-28, 1981.

population is concerned. This response was generally spread across parties as well as residential locales of MLAs and it could be classified as their general response. Only 8% of the MLAs said that their constituents brought them mainly public problems, also spread between the ruling and opposition parties as well as rural or urban residence.

Uttar Pradesh is different again in the fact that not ruling but opposition MLAs generally reported a slightly higher number of visitors (average 122 against the ruling BJP's 112). But this has to be viewed in light of the fact that the BJP MLAs were mostly new, and had not yet established their reputations as listening-posts. Generally, it takes a legislator some time to tour most areas of his constituency, to develop his contacts with the people and to establish a reputation for being sympathetic.

Overall, we found that one-third of all MLAs received over 100 visitors a day - a large number by any standards. Half of the sample received between 20 to 100 visitors a day. Generally, the ruling party MLAs recorded a higher number of visitors than the opposition. About 75% of the MLAs said that 'mainly personal' problems were brought to them, and only 19% responded that their constituents brought them mainly public or community issues. 17% said that they received both personal and public problems in equal proportion. The five states ranked as follows on the visitor index: 1) Uttar Pradesh **3.26**, 2) Maharashtra **2.97**, 3) Tamilnadu **2.92**, 4) Haryana **1.93**, and, 5) West Bengal **1.93**.

Since it appeared that MLAs in urban areas generally got more visitors than elsewhere, we analyzed the information by residence. The residence-wise data are presented in table V.3 below:

**Table V.3**  
**Estimated average daily visitors**  
**while in Constituency**  
**(Residence-wise)**

| <b>Residential Background</b> | <b>Upto 19</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>20-49</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>50-99</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>100-149</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Over 150</b> | <b>%</b> |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|----------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| Rural                         | 8              | 13%      | 14           | 22%      | 10           | 16%      | 19             | 30%      | 12              | 19%      |
| Semi-Urban                    | 2              | 8%       | 6            | 23%      | 6            | 23%      | 9              | 35%      | 3               | 11%      |
| Urban                         | 6              | 6%       | 24           | 24%      | 27           | 27%      | 22             | 22%      | 21              | 21%      |
| Metropolitan                  | 6              | 33%      | 2            | 11%      | 3            | 17%      | 7              | 39%      |                 | 0%       |

Note: N = Rural 63, Semi-urban 26, Urban 100, Metropolitan 18, and Total 207.

Urban MLAs indeed appeared to be receiving a higher number of visitors. Most MLAs related this to requests for employment and transfers between different government departments. Across various political parties, this appeared to dominate the response of urban MLAs. The ranking of MLAs from different residence locales on our index of visitors (compiled along the same lines as the state-wise index, see footnote 6) is as follows: 1) Urban **3.28**, 2) Rural **3.20**, 3) Semi-urban **3.19**, and, 4) Metropolitan **2.61**.

The above data indicate that MLAs as an institution mainly serve two functions:

- i. they are now an institution through which personal favours might be obtained.  
The result is that anyone who helps at the time of the election expects that he would be among the first to receive out of turn favours, and,
- ii. secondly, they serve as a safety-valve for people to off-load their grievances.

In most cases the MLAs cannot do much to alleviate the personal problems brought by their constituents. All they attempt to do is give some advice or write a recommendation letter that they know will probably be ignored. Even where people understand this situation, they still come to the MLAs who are at least willing (in most cases) to hear them out.

In this respect the state-level MLAs in India are no different from the legislators of many other developing and even developed countries. We have seen that legislators, even in developed countries like the USA, find that errand running is a part of their job. It is in this function by default that the Indian MLA seems to be serving some purpose. Through his errand-running and through performing the safety-valve function he does to some extent become an instrument of stability; not a good instrument, but at least something in the absence of any other route available to the populace. As one of the MLAs commented to us,

People come to meet an MLA only because he is willing to listen to them, even when he can not do anything to alleviate their problems. You see, the administration has no time or patience for the people. These people will flock wherever they can just be heard by someone sympathetic. They feel better when they have off-loaded their grievance. (translated from Hindi)<sup>10</sup>

#### MLAs and their constituents (Party-wise)

The party-wise data in this regard are presented in table V.4 below:

**Table V.4**  
Estimated average daily  
visitors while in Constituency  
(Party-wise)

| PARTY      | Upto<br>20 |     | Between<br>20-50 |     | Between<br>50-100 |     | Between<br>100-150 |     | Over<br>150 |     |
|------------|------------|-----|------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|-------------|-----|
|            | No.        | %   | No.              | %   | No.               | %   | No.                | %   | No.         | %   |
| Cong.I     | 6          | 12% | 15               | 29% | 9                 | 17% | 14                 | 27% | 8           | 15% |
| CPI(M)     | 12         | 36% | 7                | 21% | 6                 | 18% | 7                  | 21% | 1           | 3%  |
| BJP        | 1          | 3%  | 8                | 21% | 10                | 26% | 12                 | 31% | 8           | 21% |
| DMK        | 0          | 0%  | 2                | 11% | 6                 | 32% | 7                  | 37% | 4           | 21% |
| Janata Dal | 0          | 0%  | 8                | 22% | 9                 | 24% | 9                  | 24% | 11          | 30% |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

<sup>10</sup> The quotation is translated from Hindi, *"Ek MLA ko milné log sirf is liyē jatē hein kyonki woh unki sūn bhar lēta hai, kar to kuch nahin sakta. Yeh log to wahin pahunchēngē jahan inki koi sūn bhar lē. Unka bhoj thora halka ho jata hai."*

In Cong.I, most MLAs (29%) stated that they received a daily average of between 20 to 50 visitors. A similar proportion (27%) reported a daily average of between 100 to 150 visitors. To see if MLAs from different political parties had different experience in this regard, we created the index of visitors received by MLAs of each party. The formula followed is the same as earlier; we assigned a weight of 1 to 5 to our five categories. Visitors of up to 20 were assigned a weight of 1, between 20 and 50 were assigned a weight of 2, and so on to visitors over 150, who were assigned a weight of 5. The weighted number was then divided by the number of MLAs from the respective parties.<sup>11</sup> Based on this formula, Cong.I MLAs had a visitors' index of **3.06**.

The CPI(M) presented a different picture. Average daily visitors of fewer than 20 were reported by 36%. In other parties this figure was - Cong.I 12%, BJP 3%, and nil each for DMK and Janata Dal as they usually received a higher number. We have discussed above this peculiar aspect of CPI(M), where the party offices have taken over most of this function. The next highest proportion (21%) of CPI(M) MLAs stated that they generally received between 20 to 50 visitors, and an equal 21% said that they received an average of between 100 to 150 visitors every day. CPI(M) scored a low **2.33** on our index of visitors.

The largest proportion of BJP MLAs (31%) stated that they received a daily number of between 100 to 150 visitors on average, and 26% said that they received between 50 to 100 visitors daily. Generally MLAs reported higher numbers than Cong.I and CPI(M). Only 3% declared that they received on average less than 20 visitors per day. BJP's score on our visitors' index was **3.46**.

---

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 6

The DMK legislators again generally reported a high number of daily visitors. Most (37%) said that they received between 100 to 150 visitors a day. A close second at 32% was between 50 to 100 daily. This is reflected in a DMK score of **3.68** on our index - the highest among all our states.

In Janata Dal, once again, most MLAs (30%) stated that they received over 150 visitors at an average. The second largest proportion of MLAs (24%) reported visitors between 100 to 150 and an equal 24% stated that they received an average daily number of 50 to 100 visitors. None had visitors of below 20 per day. As a result, Janata Dal also scores a high **3.62** on our index of visitors.

Taking all parties into account, we found that DMK ranked first on our index of visitors followed in order, by Janata Dal, BJP, Cong.I, and CPI(M) as shown in table V.5 below:

**Table V.5**  
**Index of Visitors**  
**(Party-wise)**

| <b>PARTY</b> | <b>INDEX</b> | <b>RANK</b> |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| DMK          | 3.68         | 1           |
| Janata Dal   | 3.62         | 2           |
| BJP          | 3.46         | 3           |
| Cong.I       | 3.06         | 4           |
| CPI(M)       | 2.33         | 5           |

Although CPI(M) MLAs generally received a much lower number of visitors as compared to others, this is a function of the CPI(M) culture where most grievances were taken to the local party office which appeared to take this role seriously. The only other political party with a similar culture was the Shiv-Sena in Maharashtra. They too appeared to encourage people to come to their local offices with their

grievances. As with state-wise analysis, we also investigated whether there was any rural or urban bias in the number of visitors received and found that it is in urban areas that the MLAs receive maximum visitors related primarily to requests for employment and transfers.

We again created an index of visitors. The following table V.6 presents the ranking on the Party-wise, residence-wise index of visitors:

| <b>Table V.6</b>                      |              |             |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| <b>Residence-wise</b>                 |              |             |
| <b>Index of Visitors (Party-wise)</b> |              |             |
| <b>Residence of MLAs</b>              | <b>Index</b> | <b>Rank</b> |
| URBAN                                 | 3.33         | 1           |
| RURAL                                 | 3.14         | 2           |
| SEMI-URBAN                            | 3.13         | 3           |
| METROPOLITAN                          | 2.73         | 4           |

This information is in line with the state-wise index (see page 134).

### **Type of requests by the visitors (Party-wise)**

The party-wise data are presented in table V.7 below:

**Table V.7**  
**Type of requests made by the Constituents**  
**(Party-wise)**

| <b>TYPE OF REQUESTS</b> | <b>Cong.I</b> |            | <b>CPI(M)</b> |            | <b>BJP</b> |            | <b>DMK</b> |            | <b>Janata Dal</b> |            | <b>T O T A L</b> |            |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------------|------------|
|                         | <b>No.</b>    | <b>%</b>   | <b>No.</b>    | <b>%</b>   | <b>No.</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>No.</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>No.</b>        | <b>%</b>   | <b>No.</b>       | <b>%</b>   |
| Nearly all Personal     | 5             | 10%        | 0             | 0%         | 6          | 15%        | 1          | 5%         | 6                 | 16%        | 18               | 10%        |
| Mostly Personal         | 25            | 48%        | 17            | 52%        | 11         | 28%        | 9          | 47%        | 14                | 38%        | 76               | 42%        |
| Police Excesses         | 1             | 2%         | 0             | 0%         | 7          | 18%        | 0          | 0%         | 12                | 32%        | 20               | 11%        |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>        | <b>31</b>     | <b>60%</b> | <b>17</b>     | <b>52%</b> | <b>24</b>  | <b>61%</b> | <b>10</b>  | <b>52%</b> | <b>32</b>         | <b>86%</b> | <b>114</b>       | <b>63%</b> |
| Both Equal              | 10            | 19%        | 10            | 30%        | 8          | 21%        | 2          | 11%        | 1                 | 3%         | 31               | 17%        |
| Mostly Public           | 10            | 19%        | 6             | 18%        | 7          | 18%        | 7          | 37%        | 4                 | 11%        | 34               | 19%        |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

Note 2: One Cong.I MLA did not offer any comments



The key finding is that ‘mostly public’ is very low except for DMK (37%). If we combine the first three categories, namely “nearly all personal”, “mostly personal” and “Police excesses”, the results are: Janata Dal 86%, BJP 61%, Cong.I 60%, CPI(M) 52%, and DMK 52%. Without doubt the MLAs of all political parties are inundated with requests for personal favours from their visitors and the office of the MLA has become a putative source of patronage.

### Organisation in Constituencies

MLAs are expected to do a lot of paper work as a follow up on the issues they take up with different departments of the administration. Quite often, they have to draft applications on behalf of their constituents who may be illiterate. We tried to establish if they had any organisation at their constituency to help them with the paper work as well as with the other secretarial matters that their job throws up.

We found that generally the MLAs do not have any organisation at their constituencies, except in Maharashtra where the government provides one secretarial assistant to each member.

**Table V.8**  
**Organisation in Constituencies**

| STATE          | YES | %    | NO | %   |
|----------------|-----|------|----|-----|
| Haryana        | 2   | 13%  | 13 | 87% |
| Maharashtra    | 42  | 100% | 0  | 0%  |
| TamilNadu      | 17  | 45%  | 21 | 55% |
| West Bengal    | 42  | 93%  | 3  | 7%  |
| Uttar Pradesh* | 21  | 31%  | 46 | 69% |
| TOTAL          | 124 | 60%  | 83 | 40% |

**Note\*.** Out of the 21, 16 mentioned it is their party organisation which provides secretarial help.  
N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana the answer to this question was a general 'no'. Only 2 of the respondents said that they sometimes had volunteer party workers in their constituency to help them. The remaining 13 had no help.

Maharashtra, as we have already pointed out, had a 100% 'yes' on this issue as the government pays for one secretary for each MLA. The assistant is directly employed by the MLA and the government simply provides an adequate allowance. MLAs could, if they wished, employ their own relatives and some do, but we found that most had unrelated assistant and that the MLAs took their paper work seriously. We observed them constantly demanding information from their assistants and asking them to note down various details. Obviously, the Maharashtra MLAs have a better chance to do their job effectively than MLAs from other states, who have no such paid help and who therefore must waste a lot of time for want of an assistant.

In Tamilnadu, 45% of the respondents said that they had some organisation in their constituencies. Of these, 65% said that this organisation, usually a personal assistant, had to be paid from their own earnings and allowances. This response cut across party lines and therefore is not indicative of any particular party culture, except for CPI(M) MLAs who responded that they always had a party organisation to help them. Excluding this particular party, whether an MLA will have someone to do his paper work is dependent on whether he is prepared to incur the (small) expenditure it entails.

In West Bengal, due to the dominance of the CPI(M) in the assembly and therefore in our sample, the majority responded that they had some organisation in their constituencies, except for a small proportion - about 10% of this group - who said that their help was only voluntary; all others said that their secretarial help was from their respective party organisations. This response is entirely consistent with the way

in which the leftist parties conduct their affairs. The presence of the party and party offices is very strong in comparison to other parties.

In UP 31% of the MLAs responded that they had the benefit of an organisation to help them in their routine clerical and follow-up work. However, this response was dominated by the ruling BJP who constituted 76% of this group. The organisational help that they had at their disposal was from their party offices. There was only one independent candidate who said that he had personally hired an assistant without whom he could not cope with the necessary paper work thrown up by his job.

Overall, we find that except for Maharashtra, where the state government has provided secretarial assistance, there is no recognition that these MLAs need help to perform a meaningful job. West Bengal is different only because the Left-front parties provide support, but they don't expect their MLAs to be inundated with any clerical work as the party offices perform that function.

### Organisation in Constituencies (Party-wise)

The party-wise data relating to this question are given below in table V.9:

**Table V.9**  
**Organisation in Constituencies**  
**(Party-wise)**

| <b>PARTY</b> | <b>YES</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>NO</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|--------------|------------|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Cong.I       | 31         | 60%            | 21        | 40%        |
| CPI(M)       | 33         | 100%           | 0         | 0%         |
| BJP          | 22*        | 56%            | 17        | 44%        |
| DMK          | 8          | 42%            | 11        | 58%        |
| Janata Dal   | 6          | 16%            | 31        | 84%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>56%</b>     | <b>80</b> | <b>44%</b> |

**Note \*** : Out of the 22, 15 mentioned that their party organisation that helps  
Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

The figures relating to Cong.I in the above table are misleading. In Maharashtra government provides one secretary to each MLA and Cong.I's status as the ruling party in Maharashtra creates a disproportionately positive answer to this question. We recalculated the figures after eliminating Maharashtra and the results are shown in table V.10 below:

**Table V.10**  
**Organisation in Constituencies**  
**((Party-wise excluding Maharashtra))**

| <b>PARTY</b> | <b>YES</b> | <b>PERCENT</b> | <b>NO</b> | <b>PERCENT</b> |
|--------------|------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Cong.I       | 9          | 31%            | 20        | 69%            |
| CPI(M)       | 31         | 100%           | 0         | 0%             |
| BJP          | 16*        | 48%            | 17        | 52%            |
| DMK          | 8          | 42%            | 11        | 58%            |
| Janata Dal   | 2          | 6%             | 31        | 94%            |

Note: \* 15 out of these 16 mentioned that their Party organisation helped.  
N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

The only party that supports its legislators with secretarial back-up is the CPI(M), where we have a 100% affirmation that organisational support is available. The highest among the other parties is BJP, where half the MLAs have access to the party organisation for their paper work. Third is DMK, suggesting that the cadre-based parties have better organisational facilities available for their legislators than the non-cadre centrist ones. For example, Janata Dal has no support organisation at all for its legislators. The general party political culture clearly does not provide any real help to the legislators at state level.

## VI. ASSEMBLY ACTIVITY

The Indian Constitution provides that a gap of six months “shall not intervene” between sessions of National Parliament or of the state assemblies.<sup>1</sup> It, however, does not lay down any rules for the number of days in each session or the number of sessions in a given year. Different state governments in India therefore follow their own mechanisms for holding the assembly sessions within the mandatory requirement of not permitting six months to pass between assembly sessions. In recent years, for example, the state of Haryana has generally held as few sessions as the government can get by with. Maharashtra, by contrast, has regular assembly sessions at pre-determined times but even here the total number of sessions in a given year are relatively few. We have already noted in Chapter I that the number of days during 1991 for which the Assemblies of our five states met ranged from 19 (Haryana) to 49 (West Bengal).

An important part of the MLA’s function is to attend the assembly when it is in session. Three main reasons may be identified; two tactical and one genuinely result-oriented. The first is that assembly sessions are routinely used by the opposition in their constant attempt to undermine the working of the government. Most opposition MLAs interviewed by Shashi Lata Puri stated that their role in the assembly was “constructive criticism and opposing wrong policies of the government”. Much fewer said that it was “to highlight the problems of the people”.<sup>2</sup> In practical terms it means that the opposition feels it must criticise whatever action the government takes or whatever policy it adopts.

---

<sup>1</sup> Constitution of India, Article 174.

<sup>2</sup> Shashi Lata Puri, *Legislative Elite in an Indian State*, op. cit., p. 246

During our witnessing of the proceedings in UP Assembly, we observed that leaders of the opposition, particularly those from the preceding ruling party, attempted to blame the government for problems that were created under their own rule only a few months earlier. Indian state legislatures are full of examples where the opposition creates mayhem in the assembly and stages *walk-outs*<sup>3</sup>, often on flimsy grounds. This happens even in the Lok Sabha as illustrated by the several cases documented by Fartya though he comments that “the parliament was generally well behaved in comparison with the state legislatures where the opposition members were seen to kick the chairs”.<sup>4</sup> Pallanithurai, from his interviews with 179 legislators of the Tamilnadu assembly, informs us that nearly all MLAs felt that pandemonium in the assembly was *justified* as it drew the attention of the executive and the media. He argues that most new legislators are unversed in rules and procedures of the assembly, which often leads to the presiding officers denying them permission to raise issues in the assembly. Many of his interviewees stated that this was one main reason for the frequent pandemonium in the assembly.<sup>5</sup> In a general way the opposition always votes against all government motions. The principle of criticising all or most government action is not uncommon; the British House of Commons displays similar characteristics as the government can do nothing right so far as the opposition is concerned. Norton argues that the whole structure of a Parliamentary day is based upon a confrontation between Government and opposition.<sup>6</sup> However, the practice in India has transformed itself from debating issues to manhandling the opposition.

---

<sup>3</sup> This is a frequent occurrence in Indian state legislatures. The opposition MLAs converge in the well of the House shouting slogans, disregard any instructions or appeals from the speaker, and simply walk out of the Assembly.

<sup>4</sup> H S Fartya, *Role of Opposition in the Indian Parliament* (Allahabad, Chaitanya Publishing, 1971) pp. 214-227

<sup>5</sup> G Pallanithurai, *Role Perceptions of Legislators: A Case Study of Tamilnadu* (Delhi: Konarak Publishers, 1991) p. 106 (emphasis mine)

<sup>6</sup> Philip Norton, *The Commons in Perspective* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985) pp. 62-64

Many such cases are reported in the local and national media.<sup>7</sup> In the Tamilnadu assembly, when the author commented on the small pouches filled with sawdust for use as paper weights, the concerned official explained that sawdust was used because the regular paperweights in the past were hurled at one another by members.

The second reason is that individual MLAs increasingly look at the scarce assembly sessions as their opportunity to appear in the local press and gain some local prominence/attention. Local press covers the assembly proceedings in detail and most MLAs wish to gain publicity to convey an impression to their constituents that they are active. Coverage in the local press is often used as a qualification to be publicised at the time of election campaigns.<sup>8</sup> This strategy appears to be used by many MLAs in the expectation that it will help to promote their political careers.

The third reason is that questions can be brought up in the assembly to highlight issues that may not be receiving adequate attention from the government, or may have potential for political gains. A fourth reason is the inevitable command from time to time by the party whips when any important issue is to be voted upon.

Assembly activity being such a central part of a legislator's role, we investigated the perceptions of our sampled MLAs concerning the value of their assembly-related role. Our enquiry was based on four questions. The first related to how much value the

---

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, 'Tamilnadu: Sordid Drama' in *Frontline*, April 1-14, 1989. This relates to the exchange of blows in the Tamilnadu assembly as a result of which some members including the present Chief Minister, Jayalalitha, were hospitalised.

<sup>8</sup> It is this motivation that accounts for a fair number of MLAs constantly trying to bring up issues that would get the attention of the local press irrespective of whether the issues have any relevance to the subject under discussion, or to their constituents, or indeed to the state as a whole. Pallanithurai also points to this and comments that legislators attempt to "give the impression to the constituents that they tried their best to raise the issues" *Role Perception of Legislators*, op. cit., p. 107

MLAs placed on speaking in the Assembly. In other words, when they got the opportunity to speak in the House, did they think that their speaking had “great” value, or conversely did they believe that this activity had “poor” value? The second question related to their work in legislative committees. Did they believe that they achieved something as a result of their work in legislative committees? Were they able to resolve problems and prevent their recurrence? The third related to answers given by the government to questions raised in the assembly. Were these well researched and thought out responses that could generally be termed satisfactory? The final question enquired whether debates in the assembly were dominated by a few vocal members or was participation general. These were all multiple-choice questions where we provided the categories of response and the MLAs chose the one which most clearly reflected their views. The response of our sample on these issues follows.

#### VALUE OF SPEAKING IN THE ASSEMBLY

The answers to the first question about value of speaking in the assembly are summarised in table VI.1 below:

**Table VI.1**  
**Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity**  
**(Speaking in Assembly)**

| VIEWS            | Haryana  |            | Maharashtra |            | Tamilnadu |            | West Bengal |            | Uttar Pradesh |            | Total     |            |
|------------------|----------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                  | No.      | %          | No.         | %          | No.       | %          | No.         | %          | No.           | %          | No.       | %          |
| Great value      | 4        | 27%        | 8           | 19%        | 10        | 26%        | 2           | 4%         | 4             | 6%         | 28        | 14%        |
| Good value       |          | 0%         | 6           | 14%        | 9         | 24%        | 17          | 38%        | 23            | 34%        | 55        | 27%        |
| <b>Sub-Total</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>27%</b> | <b>14</b>   | <b>33%</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>50%</b> | <b>19</b>   | <b>42%</b> | <b>27</b>     | <b>40%</b> | <b>83</b> | <b>41%</b> |
| Fair value       | 8        | 53%        | 15          | 36%        | 14        | 37%        | 5           | 11%        | 14            | 21%        | 56        | 27%        |
| Poor value       | 3        | 20%        | 12          | 29%        | 5         | 13%        | 11          | 24%        | 21            | 31%        | 52        | 25%        |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

Note 2: 16 MLAs (MH 1, WB 10 and UP 5) did not comment as they were newly elected and said that they did not have adequate experience to comment.



Most MLAs in Haryana (53%) generally placed a “fair” value on their speaking in the assembly. Paradoxically, the rest of the MLAs were almost equally divided in classifying this activity as being of “great” value (27%), or of “poor” value (20%). Those who said that it had “great” value mainly belonged to the opposition. This is, in a way, counter-intuitive because ordinarily one would expect the ruling party to defend all assembly activity as it relates directly to their own government. It also indicates that the opposition MLAs take personal satisfaction in being able to speak their mind in the House. Although no result may be obtained by their outbursts or even by their having brought up relevant issues, they get some attention and perhaps coverage by local media.

Of those who said that this activity had “poor” value, a majority belonged to the ruling party indicating dissatisfaction with the system. This again is counter-intuitive; the opposition should be the one to complain that nothing really helps, and that the government is totally impervious to any attempt on their part to raise relevant issues. In order to have a consistent basis for comparing the response in different states, we created an index for this activity by assigning a weight of 4 to the response “Great value”, and progressively 1 to “Poor value”. We ignored the “No Comments”. On this index, Haryana scored 2.33.<sup>9</sup>

We found a similar strain in Maharashtra, where a majority of MLAs (36%) endorsed the view that the value for this activity was only “fair”. About one-half of this proportion (19%) said that there was “great” value in speaking in the assembly.

---

<sup>9</sup> To illustrate: 4 MLAs with who responded “Great value” were multiplied by the weight assigned to this response ( $4 \times 4 = 16$ ); 8 who said “Fair value” were multiplied by 2 ( $8 \times 2 = 16$ ); 3 who said “Poor value” were multiplied by 1 ( $1 \times 3 = 3$ ). The total weighted response was  $16+16+3 = 35$ . This divided by the number of Haryana MLAs gave us the index for the state ( $35/15 = 2.33$ )

Those who said that it had “poor” value were substantially higher at 29%. Again, in line with our experience in Haryana, of those who said that speaking in assembly had “great” value, a majority was from the opposition (75%) and the balance of 25% were from the ruling party, Cong.I. However, those who said that the value in speaking was “poor” were equally divided between the ruling and the opposition. The index for Maharashtra was **2.24**.

In Tamilnadu, in conformity with Haryana and Maharashtra, most MLAs (37%) responded that there was “fair” value in speaking in the assembly. But Tamilnadu certainly presented a different picture for MLAs who were at the two extremes: of those who said that this activity was of “great” value (26%), a majority (80%) were from the ruling party, and of those who felt that this activity was of “poor” value (13%) - the lowest among all states - a majority was from the opposition candidates (60%). This contrasts with both Haryana and Maharashtra and appears indicative of a strong sense of party loyalty so far as the ruling DMK were concerned. We constantly felt that the approach of the DMK MLAs was to portray their government in a good light and therefore they were not willing to say anything that they perceived could be interpreted as ineffectiveness of *their* government. In Tamilnadu, therefore, we had a situation where the MLAs who said that this activity had either “great” or “good” value comprised one-half of the sample and 73% of these were from the ruling party. This has clear bias in favour of the ruling party. Of the balance one-half who said that this activity was either “fair” or “poor”, 58% were from the opposition and the balance of 42% were from the ruling party. This may be related to a higher proportion of lawyers among their ranks and the emphasis on the oratorical skills of politicians as we have observed in chapter II. As a result of this positive response from the ruling party MLAs, Tamilnadu scored a relatively higher **2.63** on our index and topped the ranking for this activity.

In West Bengal a majority of MLAs said that speaking in the assembly represented “good” value (38%). However it is important to note that of the one-quarter of our sample who felt that it had “poor” value, over one-half were from the ruling left front. All of these members had been elected for at least three terms and therefore it was their considered response relating to their perceptions of assembly deliberations. Of those who said that it had “good” value, 88% were from the ruling left front. Only 4% said that the value of speaking could be classified as “great” and they were all from the ruling left front. A large proportion of MLAs (22%), mainly from the ruling left-front, offered no comments to this question, because they were all new MLAs who said that they had no personal experience in the matter. West Bengal scored **2.29** on our index.

In Uttar Pradesh too, most MLAs (34%) said that speaking in the assembly had “good” value. Once again, of those who said that it had “good” value, a majority (56%) were from the opposition. Those who said that this activity had “fair” value were almost exclusively from the opposition (95%), indicating that the opposition felt that it always gained something from the opportunity it had of speaking in the assembly. It is interesting to note that of those who assigned “poor” value to this activity, almost one-half were from the ruling party BJP. This is of special significance considering that the BJP came to its position of power during the summer of 1991 and our interviews were conducted in the winter of 1991/92. From a newly elected assembly which had a large proportion of first time members, this response speaks about the poor culture of state-level politics in India. 8% of the sample offered “no comments” to this question, but they were all new first-time MLAs of the BJP and said that they did not have adequate personal experience in this matter. Uttar Pradesh at **2.16** had the lowest score on our index.

Taking all states into account, a not insignificant proportion of MLAs - 25%, responded that speaking in the assembly had “poor” value and of this proportion one-half were from the ruling parties of their states. A further 27% said that it had only “fair” value. Therefore, a majority, albeit thin, felt that this activity has “poor” value or at best “fair” value. Those who fell under the category of “great” or “good” value were 43% of the sample (ignoring “no comments”) and of this proportion 63% were from the ruling parties and 37% were from the opposition.

The ranking of the five states on our index is shown in table VI.2 below:

**Table VI.2**  
**Index of the Value of Speaking**  
**in the Assembly**

| STATE         | INDEX | RANK |
|---------------|-------|------|
| Tamilnadu     | 2.63  | 1    |
| Haryana       | 2.33  | 2    |
| West Bengal   | 2.29  | 3    |
| Maharashtra   | 2.24  | 4    |
| Uttar Pradesh | 2.16  | 5    |

(Index Range = Min.1, Max.4)

#### **Value of speaking in the Assembly (Party-wise)**

In line with the state-wise analysis concluded above, we analyse below the response of our sample MLAs to this question on a party-wise scale. The response is summarised in table VI.3:

**Table VI.3**  
**Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity**  
**(Speaking in the Assembly)**  
**(Party-wise)**

| VIEWS            | Cong.I    |            | CPI(M)    |            | BJP       |            | DMK       |            | Janata Dal |            | Total     |            |
|------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                  | No.       | %          | No.       | %          | No.       | %          | No.       | %          | No.        | %          | No.       | %          |
| Great value      | 6         | 12%        | 1         | 3%         | 3         | 8%         | 7         | 37%        | 4          | 11%        | 21        | 10%        |
| Good value       | 8         | 15%        | 13        | 39%        | 10        | 26%        | 6         | 32%        | 11         | 30%        | 48        | 23%        |
| <b>Sub-Total</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>27%</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>42%</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>34%</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>69%</b> | <b>15</b>  | <b>41%</b> | <b>69</b> | <b>33%</b> |
| Fair value       | 21        | 40%        | 5         | 15%        | 6         | 15%        | 5         | 26%        | 11         | 30%        | 48        | 23%        |
| Poor value       | 15        | 29%        | 6         | 18%        | 15        | 38%        | 1         | 5%         | 11         | 30%        | 48        | 23%        |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

Note 2: 15 MLAs (Cong.I 2, CPI(M) 8, BJP 5) did not comment as they were newly elected and said that they did not have adequate experience to comment.

A majority of Cong.I MLAs (40%) generally placed a “fair” value on their speaking in the assembly. The next highest proportion (29%) stated that there was “poor” value in speaking. Those who classified speaking in the assembly as being of either “great” value (12%), or “good” value (15%) were in a minority. We also investigated if the response of the Cong.I MLAs was appreciably different when they were members of the ruling party compared to when they were members of the opposition, but we did not find any significant variance. We can say that the findings are generally applicable across the Cong.I ranks.

As in the state-wise analysis above, we created an index of the value that the MLAs place on their speaking in the assembly. Cong.I’s score on this index was 2.1.

In CPI(M) most of the MLAs (39%) thought that the value of speaking in the assembly was “good”. A quarter of our sample (24%) offered “no comments” to the question, mainly as they were new MLAs who did not feel that they had the necessary personal experience to justify answering this question. 18% of the MLAs stated that it had “poor” value. This latter figure is important in the case of a

disciplined party that demands party loyalty above all else. The index of value of speaking in the assembly was **2.36** for CPI(M) indicating that its MLAs generally placed a higher value on speaking in the assembly when compared to the MLAs from Cong.I.

In contrast with CPI(M), a majority of MLAs from BJP stated that speaking in the assembly had “poor” value; 38% of the BJP MLAs fell in this category. The next highest proportion of 26% said that it had “good” value. The index of value of speaking in the assembly for BJP was **2.03**, lower than both CPI(M) and Cong.I. This is counter-intuitive because the bulk of BJP MLAs were not only first-time members but they were also part of a ruling party for the first time. In commenting about the poor value of speaking in the assembly they may have been censuring their own government.

DMK towers above all other parties in that a majority of its MLAs (37%) stated that the value of speaking in the assembly was “great”. Compare this proportion to the next highest in this category from the other parties - 12% from Cong.I. In our view, this response on the part of DMK legislators represented on the one hand, a strong sense of party loyalty. On the other, it was also representative of the political culture that places a high value on the oratorical skills of the politicians and of the fact that a relatively larger proportion of DMK legislators were lawyers (Chapter III). A further 32% of the DMK MLAs said that the value of speaking in the assembly was “good” and by combining these two categories, we observe that a substantial majority of 69% thought that it was either “great” or “good”. This pattern of response gives us, at **3.0**, a relatively high index of the value of speaking in the assembly for DMK MLAs.

The response from the Janata Dal MLAs was in some ways indeterminate. 30% each stated that the value of speaking in the assembly was “good”, “fair”, and “poor”. The balance of 10% thought that it was “great”. This response pattern gave us the index of value of speaking in the assembly as **2.22**.

Based on this index we provide the respective rank of the five parties in the following table VI.4:

**Table VI.4**  
**Index of the Value of Speaking**  
**in the Assembly**  
**(Party-wise)**

| <b>PARTY</b> | <b>INDEX</b> | <b>RANK</b> |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| DMK          | 3.00         | 1           |
| CPI(M)       | 2.36         | 2           |
| Janata Dal   | 2.22         | 3           |
| Cong.I       | 2.10         | 4           |
| BJP          | 2.03         | 5           |

(Index Range = Min.1, Max.4)

This indicates that the MLAs of two regional parties with a strong sense of member loyalty are the ones that place maximum value on their speaking in the assembly.

#### **PERCEIVED VALUE IN THE WORK OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES**

Every state assembly regularly constitutes committees for specific purposes. Many of these are permanent committees (in nature not in membership) with defined functions. Some of these legislative committees, such as the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) or the Estimates Committee, are common to all state legislatures. There are others which may be unique to a particular state, as in the case of Employment Guarantee Committee in Maharashtra. The number of these committees in each legislature is such that a fair number of legislators become members of one or the other committee during their term in the legislature especially because the members and the chairmen

of most committees are selected on an annual basis. In Chapter X, we discuss in detail the concept of legislative committees and critically examine the working of the Public Accounts Committee in the five legislatures encompassed in this thesis.

Since Legislative committees are such an integral part of each state legislature, we asked the MLAs whether they saw any real value in their functioning. Did they feel that the work of the committees, and particularly their own work in them, got results of some value? Their response is summarised in table VI.5 below:

**Table VI.5**  
**Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity**  
**(Work of Legislative Committees)**

| VIEWS        | Haryana |     | Maharashtra |     | Tamilnadu |     | West Bengal |     | Uttar Pradesh |     | Total |     |
|--------------|---------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------|-----|
|              | No.     | %   | No.         | %   | No.       | %   | No.         | %   | No.           | %   | No.   | %   |
| Good results | 3       | 20% | 19          | 45% | 18        | 47% | 17          | 38% | 12            | 18% | 69    | 33% |
| Fair results | 3       | 20% | 9           | 21% | 5         | 13% | 3           | 7%  | 5             | 7%  | 25    | 12% |
| Poor results | 9       | 60% | 13          | 31% | 15        | 39% | 14          | 31% | 23            | 34% | 74    | 36% |
| No Comment   |         |     | 1           | 2%  |           |     | 11          | 24% | 27            | 40% | 39    | 19% |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, a majority of MLAs (60%) said that the work of the committees yielded hardly any results, and therefore the perceived value of these committees was “poor”. Of the MLAs in this group, 44% were from the ruling party, while those from the opposition were 56%. We can say that the opinion was fairly divided and that this view was not particularly biased in favour or against ruling or opposition parties. Two-thirds of the 20% members who felt that “good” results were obtained by their work in these legislative committees were from the opposition. Of those who said that there was “fair” value in the work of these legislative committees, two-thirds were from the ruling party. Without trying to make too fine a point about those who responded “fair” or those who responded “good”, what seems clear is that a majority in Haryana certainly regard these committees to be a waste of time.



In line with our earlier question on assembly activity, we created an index based on weighted response from the MLAs. The values assigned to “Good”, “Fair”, and “Poor” were 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The “No Comments” were ignored. On this index, Haryana scored **1.60**.

In Maharashtra, our interviews suggested that the work of legislative committees was taken more seriously. About one-half (45%) of the sample said that the results were “good”. Encouragingly, this opinion was almost equally split between the ruling and the opposition MLAs signifying that it was not just a case of partisan response from the ruling party nor was the opposition trying to run them down. About one-fifth of Maharashtra MLAs said that the committees produced “fair” results and here again the opinion was almost evenly spread between the opposition and the ruling party. The surprise in Maharashtra came from the one-third of MLAs who felt that the results were “poor”. Counter-intuitively, this opinion came primarily from the ruling party (61%). Our own study of the Public Accounts Committee of the Maharashtra assembly endorses the view that the work of the committees is of low value so far as the results of the effort are concerned (see Chapter X). On our index for this activity, Maharashtra scored a relatively higher **2.15**.

In Tamilnadu, the highest response (47%) was “good”. But this appeared to be a case of the ruling party MLAs trying to present themselves in good light. Of the sample who responded in this way, 83% were from the ruling party and only 17% from the opposition. At the other end of the spectrum, 39% responded that legislative committees functioned “poorly”. This response came mainly from the opposition, who comprised two-thirds of this group. Our own study of the Public Accounts Committee of the Tamilnadu legislature does not support the view that the work of these committees is of good value (Chapter X). Tamilnadu scored **2.08** on our index.

In West Bengal, MLAs were divided between those who assigned it “good” value and those who stated the opposite, “poor”. While 38% of the sample said that their work in the legislative committees represented “good” value, this sample was biased heavily (94%) in favour of the ruling party. This also speaks about the culture of the Left-front in general, where members are usually reluctant to say anything that might be construed as a criticism of their party’s performance. Once again we had about 24% of the sample who offered “no comments” on this issue because they were new MLAs and did not have any experience of the working of these legislative committees. About one-third of the sample said that the work of legislative committees yielded “poor” results and, surprisingly, a majority of this view was also from the ruling left-front (57%), and not from the opposition (43%). Again, our own examination of the working of the PAC of the West Bengal legislature suggests that the work of the committee is of “poor” use and that most of the comments or recommendations go without any attention from the administration (Chapter X). West Bengal scored **2.09** on our index.

In Uttar Pradesh, most MLAs (40%) offered “no comments” as they were members for the first time and had no personal experience in the matter. The next highest proportion, 34%, said that the value was “poor”. This opinion seemed markedly biased by the negative response of the opposition. However, if we ignore the “no comments” members, then out of the MLAs who responded, a majority (57%) said that the value of this activity was “poor”. Only 18% said that the work of legislative committees yielded “good” results. Significantly, these responses (after excluding no comments) were divided equally between the ruling and the opposition party members. Here again, our own examination of the reports of the PACs of the past years clearly indicated that the governments themselves did not take the work of these committees seriously. This has promoted cynicism in MLAs about the whole concept

of legislative committees. This is probably why they did not seem to put in any concerted effort towards the work of these committees, except ensuring that they met the procedural formalities. Uttar Pradesh scored **1.72** on this index.

Taking all states into account, we found a split opinion. A significant proportion of MLAs felt that the working of legislative committees yielded “poor” results (36%). Although this opinion comes primarily from the opposition parties (61% of this group), a significant percentage (39%) came from the ruling parties. The next largest proportion was at the other end of the scale as 33% of our total sample stated that the work of legislative committees yielded “good” results. This opinion weighed in favour of the ruling parties (70% of this group) but again a significant proportion from the opposition (30%) held the same view.

Overall we found a divide: in the two north Indian states, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, MLAs attached sparse value to the whole concept and the working of these legislative committees. However, in the other three states those who responded that there was “good” value in the work of legislative committees outnumbered those with the opposite view. The ranking of the five states on our index is presented in table VI.6 below:

**Table VI.6**  
**Index of perceived value of**  
**Legislative Committees**

| STATE         | INDEX | RANK |
|---------------|-------|------|
| Maharashtra   | 2.15  | 1    |
| West Bengal   | 2.09  | 2    |
| Tamilnadu     | 2.08  | 3    |
| Uttar Pradesh | 1.72  | 4    |
| Haryana       | 1.60  | 5    |

(Index Range = Min.1, Max.3)

## Perceived Value of Legislative Committees (Party-wise)

Having examined the response of MLAs on this issue on a state-wise basis, we now analyse this issue on a party-wise basis. The data are summarised in the table VI.7 below:

**Table VI.7**  
**Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity**  
**(Work of Legislative Committees)**  
**(Party-wise)**

| VIEWS        | Cong.I |     | CPI(M) |     | BJP |     | DMK |     | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|--------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|              | No.    | %   | No.    | %   | No. | %   | No. | %   | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| Good results | 13     | 25% | 12     | 36% | 9   | 23% | 15  | 79% | 11         | 30% | 60    | 29% |
| Fair results | 9      | 17% | 5      | 15% | 4   | 10% | 1   | 5%  | 3          | 8%  | 22    | 11% |
| Poor results | 28     | 54% | 8      | 24% | 9   | 23% | 3   | 16% | 14         | 38% | 62    | 30% |
| No Comment   | 2      | 4%  | 8*     | 24% | 17* | 44% | 0   | 0%  | 9          | 24% | 36    | 17% |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

\*Note 2: All new MLAs as CPI(M) had just won a new election and, BJP had won for the first time in Uttar Pradesh.

In the case of Cong.I, a majority of its legislators (54%) felt that the work of the legislative committees produced generally “poor” results - a feeling well represented by the following remarks of an MLA,<sup>10</sup>

These Committees are totally useless; they are only formed for members to travel to other states for all expense paid holidays.

In comparison, only one-quarter of its legislators stated that the results of the deliberations of these committees were “good”. Once again we created an index of this response by ignoring the “no comments” and assigning a weight of 3 to “good”, 2 to “fair” and 1 to “poor”. Based on this computation, Cong.I scored **1.70** on our index.

<sup>10</sup> Translated from Hindi: *Yeh Committian to bilkul vyarth hein, sirf ghumné ké liyé banāyi gaēen hein, sarkar ké khaté mein*. The reference is to the fact that members of different committees reciprocally travel to other states to study the working of their particular committees. This is supposed to enhance their effectiveness.

In CPI(M), while one-third of the sample (36%) said that the results of their work in the legislative committees were generally “good”, a significant proportion (24%) voiced the opposite view that the results of the work of these committees were generally “poor”. Ignoring the “no comments”, which in the case of CPI(M) were a significant 24%, we find that the views were equally divided between those who felt that the work of legislative committees generally produced “good” results and those who felt that the results were generally “poor” or at best “fair”. On our index, in this respect, the CPI(M) scored **2.16**.

BJP too had a high proportion of MLAs (44%) who did not offer any comments to this question, as several were members for the first time and did not feel that they had the requisite experience to answer this question properly. Among the rest of the MLAs the opinion was divided between “good” and “poor”, both views having been subscribed by an equal 23% of the legislators. On our index, BJP scored **2.0**.

DMK was unique in the fact that a substantial majority of its legislators (79%) stated that their work in the legislative committees generally yielded “good” results. This was well over twice the proportion of the second highest in this category - CPI(M) 36%, and over three times the lowest - BJP 23%. Consequently DMK scored a high **2.63** on our index in this respect. This response of DMK MLAs is consistent with their party loyalty. As a matter of comparison, the index score for the state of Tamilnadu was **2.08**. We have already observed that our own examination of the working of the PAC in Tamilnadu indicated poor performance.

In Janata Dal, a majority of 38% stated that the results of the work of legislative committees were “poor”. The next highest proportion (30%) was at the other end and declared that the results were “good”. Janata Dal also had a large proportion (24%) who did not offer any comments on this issue. Janata Dal scored **1.89** on our index.

In evaluating the importance that MLAs from these different political parties assign to the work of legislative committees, we rank them in the following table VI.8 based on the index score of each one:

**Table VI.8**  
**Index of the perceived value of**  
**Legislative Committees**  
**(Party-wise)**

| PARTY      | INDEX | RANK |
|------------|-------|------|
| DMK        | 2.63  | 1    |
| CPI(M)     | 2.16  | 2    |
| BJP        | 2.00  | 3    |
| Janata Dal | 1.89  | 4    |
| Cong.I     | 1.70  | 5    |

(Index Range = Min.1, Max.3)

Cong.I is well contrasted with the regional cadre parties, particularly DMK.

#### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN ASSEMBLY

The State Legislative Assembly provides the arena for its members to pose questions to the government on areas of concern to them or to their political organisations. Every sitting of the House starts with the question hour.<sup>11</sup> In principle, it is a good weapon in the hands of legislators which can be used by them to highlight lapses of

---

<sup>11</sup> There are three types of questions: starred - these get an oral answer; unstarred - these get written answers; and short notice - these may be questions of major importance which are admitted with less than five days' notice.

the government and to further their own political interests. It therefore represents an important area of activity for the MLAs. Those who are serious about an issue try to bring it up in as many different ways as they can by forming questions that force the government to respond. For those MLAs who manage to create a stir by their questioning, the reward is coverage by the local press in ways which can increase their prestige and standing in their respective constituencies and advance their political careers. Political parties use this opportunity to highlight issues which have any potential to get them political mileage. We therefore asked the MLAs what they thought of the answers from the government to the questions posed in the assembly. This was a multiple-choice question and we provided four categories: 1) satisfactory, 2) unsatisfactory, 3) mixed,<sup>12</sup> and 4) evasive<sup>13</sup>. The response from MLAs is presented in table VI.9 below:

**Table VI.9**  
**Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity**  
**(Answers to Questions in Assembly)**

| VIEWS          | Haryana |     | Maharashtra |     | Tamilnadu |     | West Bengal |     | Uttar Pradesh |     | Total |     |
|----------------|---------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                | No.     | %   | No.         | %   | No.       | %   | No.         | %   | No.           | %   | No.   | %   |
| Satisfactory   | 3       | 20% | 21          | 50% | 22        | 58% | 13          | 29% | 22            | 33% | 81    | 39% |
| Mixed          | 4       | 27% | 1           | 2%  | 5         | 13% | 10          | 22% | 11            | 16% | 31    | 15% |
| Evasive        |         | 0%  | 6           | 14% | 5         | 13% | 2           | 4%  | 15            | 22% | 28    | 14% |
| Unsatisfactory | 8       | 53% | 14          | 33% | 6         | 16% | 9           | 20% | 18            | 27% | 55    | 27% |
| No Comment     |         |     |             |     |           |     | 11          | 24% | 1             | 1%  | 12    | 6%  |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

<sup>12</sup> This indicates a response that the answers are not always satisfactory but that neither are they always unsatisfactory. The answers from the government depend, according to this opinion, on the quality and the manner of the question as well as on the competence of the minister concerned who has to reply. It is therefore a mixed bag of response.

<sup>13</sup> This meant that the government was never interested to answer any member properly and gave answers that were irrelevant. This category could fall under the overall definition of “unsatisfactory”.

In Haryana, a majority (53%) said that the answers to questions raised in the assembly were generally “unsatisfactory”. This opinion was evenly divided between the ruling and the opposition MLAs. Of the ruling party members alone this category constituted 57% and of the opposition parties alone, 50%. Those who said that the answers were “satisfactory” were 20% of the sample and were all from the ruling party. Of the number of MLAs from the ruling party in our sample 43% were in this group. Those who responded that the answers were “mixed” were also 20% of the sample and they were all from the opposition parties. The overall feel here is of a general dissatisfaction with the way in which the questions from the members are handled within the legislature.

For this activity too an index was created by assigning a weight of 4 to “Satisfactory” and progressively, 1 to “Unsatisfactory”. “No Comments” were ignored (table VI.9). Haryana scored **2.13** on this index.

In Maharashtra, one-half of the respondents said that the answers were generally “satisfactory” and this response was almost evenly divided between the ruling and the opposition parties. This has to be indicative of a more serious response by the government to questions raised in the assembly. Otherwise the opposition, who tend to tarnish the government at every opportunity that they get, would not respond in this way. Those who said that the answers were generally “unsatisfactory” were 33% of the sample and here again the opinion was divided between the ruling and the opposition in a 43:57 ratio. From their own respective numbers, 27% of the ruling party members and 40% of the opposition said so. Significantly, 14% who said that



the answers were “Generally Evasive” were mostly from the ruling party. The overall feel in Maharashtra is of an Assembly that works better in comparison to Haryana in so far as the opposition feels that there is some seriousness on the part of the government to answer their questions. Consequently, on this index, Maharashtra’s score was a relatively higher **2.69**.

In Tamilnadu, a majority (58%) said that the answers were generally “satisfactory” but this response was dominated by the views of the ruling party who comprised 73% of this group, the balance of 27% being from the opposition. The response “unsatisfactory” came from 16% of the sample which was dominated by the views of the opposition, as 83% of this response group were from the opposition parties. Those who responded “mixed” and “generally evasive” (13% each) were fairly divided between the ruling and the opposition. This is a real mixed bag where different political parties seem to have taken their respective stands against each other, but if 37% of the opposition feels that the answers are generally satisfactory then the overall situation cannot be interpreted as negative. In fact, Tamilnadu scored **3.13** on this index, the highest among our states.

West Bengal surprised us by the fact that only 29% said that the answers to their questions were generally “satisfactory”. This did not include a single member of the opposition. Out of the ranks of only the ruling Left-front, 36% were in this group. However, if we take into account that a large proportion of ruling Left-front MLAs (24%) offered no comments to this question, then of the balance who responded, 38% had stated “satisfactory”, up 9 points from 29%. Those who said it was generally

“unsatisfactory” were 20% of the total sample and if we ignore the “no comment” MLAs, this proportion rises to 26%. But, 84% of MLAs in this group were from the opposition parties and only 16% were from the ruling Left-front. In respective proportions only 6% of the ruling Left-front MLAs fell in this category while it included 78% of the opposition MLAs. There was a large response in the “mixed” category at 29% of the total sample excluding the “no comments”. Significantly, all of the respondents in this group were from the ruling Left-front. The addition of “evasive” to this proportion takes it up 6 points to 35%. West Bengal scored **2.79** on this index.

However, the overall feel here is not as positive as for example in Maharashtra since the “unsatisfactory”, “evasive” and “mixed” together account for 54% (excluding “no comments”). Also, when 29% of the disciplined ruling Left-front say that the answers are “mixed” from their own government, it indicates a general dissatisfaction with the way the issue is being handled in the assembly. Normally, we found these legislators extremely wary of responding in any way that may appear to be against the interest and/or image of their party.

In Uttar Pradesh, the highest proportion (33%) responded “satisfactory”. But this response was dominated by the members of the ruling party who constituted 77% of the group. In the same way the response which indicated that the answers were generally “unsatisfactory” was dominated by the opposition’s opinion. Out of the 27% who said so, 94% were from the opposition. Those who said that the answers were generally “mixed” were 16% of the sample and they were mainly from the ruling

party (73%). Out of the ranks of the ruling party MLAs, 28% featured in this group. There was a significant response that the answers were “Generally Evasive” (22%), but this was again dominated by the opposition who made up 87% of this group. This pattern of response corresponds to P K Srivastava’s study of the UP Council of Ministers (1967-90), wherein he argues that the questions in the House are treated apathetically by ministers and “evasive answers are given”.<sup>14</sup> Uttar Pradesh’s score on this index was **2.56**.

Taking all our states into account, the largest group (39%) felt that the answers were generally “satisfactory”, even though 74% of this group was from the ruling parties and only the balance of 26% from the opposition. Equally a significant proportion (27%) said that the answers were generally “unsatisfactory” and here the opinion was more dominated by the views of the opposition parties who constituted 73% of this group. In terms of proportions from their respective samples, 52% of the ruling parties’ MLAs said that the answers were generally “satisfactory”, while only 23% of the opposition endorsed this viewpoint. On the other hand, only 13% from the ruling parties said that the answers were generally “unsatisfactory”, while 45% from the ranks of the opposition said so. A small 15% said that the answers were “mixed”. Here the opinion was dominated by members of ruling parties who constituted 71% of this group. Those who said that the answers were “Generally Evasive” were 14% of the sample of which 36% were from the ruling parties, and the balance of 64% from the opposition parties. Adding up the MLAs under the two categories of

---

<sup>14</sup> P K Srivastava, *State Government and Politics in India* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1991) p. 146-47

“unsatisfactory” and “evasive”, we observe that 41% of our total sample felt negatively towards this issue. In terms of the respective proportions from the ruling and the opposition parties - excluding the “no comments” MLAs - 23% of MLAs from ruling parties came under this category, while the figure for opposition parties was 66%, indicating a general dissatisfaction on this issue. The ranking of the states on our index is presented in table VI.10 below:

**Table VI.10**  
**Index of Response Whether the**  
**Answers to Questions in Assembly**  
**are Generally Satisfactory**

| STATE         | INDEX | RANK |
|---------------|-------|------|
| Tamilnadu     | 3.13  | 1    |
| West Bengal   | 2.79  | 2    |
| Maharashtra   | 2.69  | 3    |
| Uttar Pradesh | 2.56  | 4    |
| Haryana       | 2.13  | 5    |

(Index Range = Min.1, Max.4)

### Answers to Questions in Assembly (Party-wise)

The party-wise response to this question is presented in table VI.11 below:

**Table VI.11**  
**Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity**  
**(Answers to Questions in Assembly)**  
**(Party-wise)**

| VIEWS          | Cong.I |     | CPI(M) |     | BJP |     | DMK |     | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|----------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                | No.    | %   | No.    | %   | No. | %   | No. | %   | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| Satisfactory   | 14     | 27% | 13     | 39% | 22  | 56% | 16  | 84% | 8          | 22% | 73    | 35% |
| Mixed          | 5      | 10% | 6      | 18% | 10  | 26% | 2   | 11% | 3          | 8%  | 26    | 13% |
| Evasive        | 10     | 19% | 3      | 9%  | 2   | 5%  | 1   | 5%  | 7          | 19% | 23    | 11% |
| Unsatisfactory | 21     | 40% | 3      | 9%  | 4   | 10% | 0   | 0%  | 19         | 51% | 47    | 23% |
| No Comment     | 2      | 4%  | 8      | 24% | 1   | 3%  | 0   | 0%  | 0          | 0%  | 11    | 5%  |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

Note 2: 11 MLAs offered no comment, 8 of these were from CPI(M).

MLAs from this party are reluctant respondents.

In Cong.I a majority (40%) said that the answers to questions asked in the assembly were generally “unsatisfactory”. A further 19% stated that the answers in the assembly were “generally evasive”. Adding these two categories of “unsatisfactory” and “evasive”, we find that a substantial 69% of Cong.I MLAs have negative reactions on this account. Just over a quarter (27%) felt that the answers were generally “satisfactory”. In this case again we created an index to measure the response pattern of MLAs from different parties by ignoring the “no comments” and assigning weights of 4 to 1 respectively to “satisfactory”, “mixed”, “evasive” and “unsatisfactory”. Cong.I scored **2.24** on this index.

In contrast to Cong.I, a majority of CPI(M) MLAs (39%) stated that the answers to questions posed in the assembly were generally “satisfactory”. There was a significant proportion (24%) who offered “no comments”. We have already explained that legislators from CPI(M) are reluctant to say anything that might be construed to be a negative comment on their party. All these MLAs were from West Bengal where the CPI(M) led Left-front was ruling the state. The next highest proportion of 18% thought that the answers were a “mixed” lot - some good, some poor. CPI(M) scored **3.16** on our index.

A majority of BJP MLAs (56%) stated that the answers to questions in the assembly were generally “satisfactory”. The next highest category (26%) was of MLAs who felt that the answers were “mixed” depending partly on the question itself and partly on the minister who was answering it. A comparatively small proportion (10%) felt

that the answers were generally “unsatisfactory”. BJP scored **3.31** on our index in this regard.

In DMK a massive majority (84%) said that the answers were generally “satisfactory”. The response that the answers were generally “unsatisfactory” found ‘nil’ support which is unique from among the five political parties under review. Those who said that the response to questions in the assembly was “mixed” were only 11% of the sample. With this kind of response DMK scored a high **3.79** on our index and easily topped the list in terms of ranking on this issue. Continuing to view DMK response in terms of party loyalty, we find that the index for the state of Tamilnadu, which included DMK and opposition, was relatively lower at **3.13**.

Janata Dal by contrast provided the highest proportion of legislators (51%) from among all the parties who stated that answers to questions were generally “unsatisfactory”. A further 19% stated that the answers were generally “evasive” and if we add these two categories, we get an imposing majority of 70% who have negative feelings in this respect. The next group, but a distant 22%, comprised MLAs who thought that the answers were generally “satisfactory”. Part of the explanation may be in the fact that Janata Dal was not the ruling party in any of the major four states (excluding Haryana) under review and as opposition they probably did not feel positive about the way in which other parties conducted business in the assembly. But part of the explanation may also lie in the catch all centrist nature of the party because we find that Cong.I and Janata Dal which have similar political culture (most

of Janata Dal members were formerly in Cong.I), are way below the other three parties. Janata Dal scored **2.00** on our index, the lowest among all our states.

Based on the index relating to the response of their respective MLAs to this issue, the ranking of these five political parties is presented in table VI.12 below:

**Table VI.12**  
**Index of Response Whether the**  
**Answers to Questions in Assembly**  
**are Generally Satisfactory**  
**(Party-wise)**

| <b>PARTY</b> | <b>INDEX</b> | <b>RANK</b> |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| DMK          | 3.79         | 1           |
| BJP          | 3.31         | 2           |
| CPI(M)       | 3.16         | 3           |
| Cong.I       | 2.24         | 4           |
| Janata Dal   | 2.00         | 5           |

(Index Range = Min.1, Max.4)

#### **COMBINED INDEX OF ASSEMBLY ACTIVITY**

Based on the response from different states on these three specific assembly activities i.e., speaking in the assembly, work of legislative committees, and answers to questions in the assembly, we are able to get a picture of what value their respective legislators place on the working of the assembly. Table VI.13 below provides the details:

**Table VI.13**  
**Indices on Assembly Activity**

| State         | Value in Speaking | Value of Legislative Committees | Answers to questions | Total Score |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Haryana       | 2.33              | 1.60                            | 2.13                 | <b>6.06</b> |
| Maharashtra   | 2.24              | <b>2.15</b>                     | 2.69                 | <b>7.08</b> |
| Tamilnadu     | <b>2.63</b>       | 2.08                            | <b>3.13</b>          | <b>7.84</b> |
| West Bengal   | 2.29              | 2.09                            | 2.79                 | <b>7.17</b> |
| Uttar Pradesh | 2.16              | 1.72                            | 2.56                 | <b>6.44</b> |

Note: Totals and highest score for each activity are in bold.

Index Range for Total = Min.3, Max.11.

We observe that Tamilnadu had the highest overall score signifying that assembly activity enjoys relatively higher value in the state. However, we also saw that this response resulted from a heavy influence of the then (1989-91) ruling party, DMK. West Bengal followed, but its response may be skewed because of a high proportion of “no comments”, who were ignored in our analysis. Maharashtra is third and Uttar Pradesh and Haryana are at the bottom of the table denoting a gap between the north and non-north states. Particularly in Uttar Pradesh we might have expected to find a better response because of a new BJP government and its mostly first time legislators. But, if there was any initial enthusiasm and belief in the system, it seems to have dwindled very fast as the UP government had been in power only for 7-8 months when we conducted our field work in February 1992.

#### **Combined Index of Assembly Activity (Party-wise)**

The party-wise indices in table VI.14 below rank parties in the order of importance that they accord to their overall assembly role. For a comparison, the score of the main states wherein lay the main strength of the party is also provided:



**Table VI.14**  
**Ranking of the parties**  
**based on the indices of**  
**response on Assembly Activity**

| <b>PARTY</b> | <b>Total of Index Scores</b> | <b>Rank</b> | <b>Main State</b> | <b>Total of Index Scores</b> |
|--------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| DMK          | 9.42                         | 1           | Tamilnadu         | 7.84                         |
| CPI(M)       | 7.68                         | 2           | West Bengal       | 7.17                         |
| BJP          | 7.34                         | 3           | Uttar Pradesh     | 6.44                         |
| Janata Dal   | 6.11                         | 4           | Haryana           | 6.06                         |
| Cong.I       | 6.04                         | 5           | Maharashtra       | 7.08                         |

Note: Index Range = Min.3, Max.11

The above figures are quite revealing in that the maximum importance to assembly activity is accorded by the regional and/or generally cadre-based parties. The more centrist and all-encompassing parties score low on this count, Cong.I ranking the lowest.

#### **PERCEIVED PARTICIPATION IN ASSEMBLY DEBATES**

The purpose of this question was to find out if there was a general participation during the assembly debates or was the arena dominated by a few MLAs from each party. The data are presented in table VI.15 below:

**Table VI.15**  
**Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity**  
**(Debates in the Assembly)**

| <b>VIEWS</b>          | <b>Haryana</b> |          | <b>Maharashtra</b> |          | <b>Tamilnadu</b> |          | <b>West Bengal</b> |          | <b>Uttar Pradesh</b> |          | <b>Total</b> |          |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------|--------------------|----------|------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|--------------|----------|
|                       | <b>No.</b>     | <b>%</b> | <b>No.</b>         | <b>%</b> | <b>No.</b>       | <b>%</b> | <b>No.</b>         | <b>%</b> | <b>No.</b>           | <b>%</b> | <b>No.</b>   | <b>%</b> |
| General participation | 2              | 13%      | 29                 | 69%      | 18               | 47%      | 8                  | 18%      | 5                    | 7%       | 62           | 30%      |
| Only few participate  | 13             | 87%      | 13                 | 31%      | 20               | 53%      | 27                 | 60%      | 62                   | 93%      | 135          | 65%      |
| No Comment            |                |          |                    |          |                  |          | 10                 | 22%      |                      |          | 10           | 5%       |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, a huge majority said that the debates were dominated by a few and that there was no general participation. The proportion who responded in this way were 87% of the sample. In addition, this response came almost equally from the ruling party and the opposition parties. This answer has to be viewed in the context of the fact that the Haryana assembly met infrequently in the recent past, and perhaps rarely to conduct serious business. The purpose of calling the assembly to session appeared to be to meet the procedural requirements. For example, during 1989 there were two sessions of the Assembly with a total of only 18 sittings.<sup>15</sup> The answers of the MLAs are therefore in keeping with the general political culture of the state.

In contrast to Haryana, a majority of Maharashtra MLAs (69%) responded that the debates had a general participation and that most members who had something to contribute got to participate in the debate. This response was not influenced by the members of the ruling party or the opposition parties; 68% of the ruling party MLAs in our sample and 70% of opposition said that there was “general” participation in the assembly debates.

Tamilnadu was a mixed picture. The response to whether the debates were general or dominated by a few was split to be slightly in favour of those who felt that the answer was “few”. But this is only an advantage of 53% to 47% which is within a  $\pm$  range of error. Significantly this view also cut across the party lines. Those who said that the debates were dominated by a few came proportionately in equal numbers

---

<sup>15</sup> 1st session - 21 Feb. to 15 March 1989 - Total sittings 15. 2nd session - 11 Sept. to 13 Sept. 1989 - Total sittings 3. The second session was clearly called to meet the six month deadline. (Source: Legislative Branch, Haryana Vidhan Sabha secretariat, Chandigarh)

from both the ruling party as well as the opposition parties. But those who said that there was general participation (47%), came substantially from the ruling party which made up 67% of this group. Of the number of MLAs from the ruling party in our sample, 54% indicated that debates had general participation while only 37% from the ranks of the opposition said the same. This pattern of response tends to favour the conclusion that the debates are usually dominated by a few members.

West Bengal was different in that the majority of members (60% of the total sample) responded that assembly debates were dominated by a few. This response was particularly significant because the bulk of this group was from the ruling Left-front (78%). In addition when we consider that about 22% of the members did not respond to this question because they were new members without any personal experience of the issue, the response by the ruling Left-front gets an even bigger weightage. When computed after ignoring the "No Comments", the members who said that a few dominated the debates in Assembly, constituted 77% of the respondents. There could be one specific reason for this response. Convention in the West Bengal assembly dictates that the ruling and the opposition parties get about equal time in assembly debates. The proportion of the ruling Left-front is much greater in the West Bengal assembly than that of the opposition. Therefore, the ruling benches do not get time in proportion to their strength in the assembly. Besides, party discipline dictates that only those designated by the party speak on selected issues.

Uttar Pradesh again presented a picture where a massive majority (93%) felt that assembly debates were dominated by a few members and that there was no general

participation. This opinion cut across party lines, almost half of this group (45%) being from the ruling party. In fact from among the ranks of the ruling party, 97% members endorsed this viewpoint. The BJP way of running the assembly is certainly presented in a poor light by this response.

Overall for the five states, there was an overwhelming feeling that the members in general were not able to participate in the assembly debates and that these were dominated by a few from each party. Apart from the fact that 65% of the sample said that the debates were dominated by a few members this figure went up to 72% of the sample once we ignored those who offered “no comments”. From the ranks of the ruling parties themselves 67% of the respondents endorsed this view. To some extent the assembly procedures are also responsible for this response because each party tries to get its most articulate members to speak and represent the party’s viewpoint in the time allotted to it. As an individual state, Maharashtra stood out in comparison to others in signifying higher value for this activity.

#### **Perceived Participation in Assembly debates (Party-wise)**

The party-wise information on whether MLAs perceive that there is general participation in the assembly debates or the arena is dominated by a few MLAs from each party is presented in table VI.16 below:

**Table VI.16**  
**Views of MLAs on Assembly Activity**  
**(Debates in the Assembly)**  
**(Party-wise)**

| VIEWS      | Cong.I |     | CPI(M) |     | BJP |     | DMK |     | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|            | No.    | %   | No.    | %   | No. | %   | No. | %   | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| General    | 21     | 40% | 8      | 24% | 6   | 15% | 11  | 58% | 5          | 14% | 51    | 28% |
| Only a few | 29     | 56% | 17     | 52% | 33  | 85% | 8   | 42% | 32         | 86% | 119   | 66% |
| No Comment | 2      | 4%  | 8      | 24% |     |     |     |     |            |     | 10    | 6%  |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

From Cong.I, a majority (56%) said that the debates were dominated by a few and that there was no general participation. A substantial minority (40%), however, stated that the debates evoked a general participation.

The CPI(M) MLAs also provided us with the same response. A majority of 52% said that the debates were generally dominated by a few. This is despite the fact that 24% of the MLAs did not give any response to this question on the grounds that they did not have adequate experience of the assembly. If we exclude these 24% from our calculation then we find that 68% of those who responded stated that the debates were dominated by a few legislators. Coming from the disciplined cadre of a leftist government, this is not a surprise because not only is the behaviour in the assembly regulated by the party, but there is one additional reason which comes in their way. As we have already mentioned, the convention followed in the West Bengal assembly is to provide equal time to ruling benches and to the opposition as far as possible. The strength of the opposition in this assembly is low, as a result of which they get extra time quite out of proportion to their strength in the assembly. This, of course,

means that the ruling party does not get adequate time in proportion to its numbers in the assembly.

An overwhelming majority (85%) of BJP MLAs said that there was no general participation in the debates and that only a few legislators from each party participated. This is indeed a surprise because, in saying so, the BJP MLAs were showing disapproval of their own government, and that too when they were in power for the first time in Uttar Pradesh.

DMK was a mixed picture. The response to whether the debates were general or dominated by a few, was in favour of those who felt that the participation was “general”. This was the only party where a majority responded in this fashion. This response is in keeping with the generally positive attitude of the DMK MLAs regarding assembly activity as shown above.

As in the case of BJP, an overwhelming majority of Janata Dal MLAs (87%) also responded that only a “few” participated in the debates in the assembly. Considering that most of the Janata Dal and the BJP were represented in North India, the fact that these two parties stood out by a large margin in saying that the debates were dominated by a “few” might be indicative of the difference in political culture between the north and the rest of India.

Overall, taking into account all five parties, DMK was the only party where an absolute majority responded that the debates had “general” participation. Cong.I,

mainly signifying the response in Maharashtra, was the second with 40%. In all other parties the response was poor on this account, indicating that assembly debates are generally monopolised by a few articulate and designated members from each party. The assembly procedures also do not encourage a greater level of general participation.

## VII. ROLE PERCEPTION OF MLAs

Role perceptions of legislators are shaped by several factors: the political culture under which they operate, the cohesion and strength of their political party, expectations of their constituents, demands of any interest-groups to which they may be aligned, mutual expectations and interactions with other parts of the legislative system (other legislators, administration and the executive), and above all their self-definition of their role. As Indian states vary a great deal in the balance between these factors, the role perceptions and role behaviour of MLAs can vary substantially between different states.

We have discussed the Wahlke et al. conceptualization of the role orientations of legislators in Chapter II. They described a variety of roles categorised under Purposive, Representational, Party, Areal and Interest-group roles.<sup>1</sup> Of the five, their typology of Purposive roles: *ritualist*, *tribune*, *inventor*, *broker*, and *opportunist*, and Representational roles: *trustee*, *delegate*, and *politico* has been used quite extensively in the literature to formulate a basis for the comparative study of legislators. Their main shortcomings, as we argued, were in not adequately providing for the role that political parties play in legislative orientations and also in neglecting the constituent-related role which Gerlich labels “errand-boy” and Kornberg calls “delegate servants”. Although, Wahlke et al. recognised that “ascribed roles” are more pervasive and that Party and Areal roles are most ascriptive, they seem to have played down these two, presumably because these have a minimal relevance to the American system.<sup>2</sup> We know that parties do not have the same hold over legislators

---

<sup>1</sup> Wahlke et al., *The Legislative System*.. op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch.16, p. 385



in the US Congress or indeed in the US State Legislatures.<sup>3</sup> In the case of developing countries, however, both roles are important, and in some cases these are the only direct roles that the legislators meaningfully play.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, in analysing the role perceptions of MLAs we base ourselves on the modified approach of Peter Gerlich who identifies two broad areas: *Representational*, concerned with legislator as a representative, and *Instrumental*, concerned with him as a member of his party.<sup>5</sup> We investigate three issues in this chapter. First, in recognition of the fact that representation has many dimensions and that, in theory, an MLA can be a multi-faceted representative, we focus on the *main* representational orientation of MLAs. We therefore posed the following question to our interviewees, 'Most of all whom do you feel you represent'? Second, in order to determine their prime role behaviour, we asked 'What role do you mainly perform above all else'? Third, in order to investigate whether they felt that they were productive and had a meaningful role to render, we asked them whether they felt that they were "effective" in performing their job. Their responses follow.

## MLA AS A REPRESENTATIVE

Our first question enquired of the MLAs whom they believed they represented above all. We presented them a choice of four categories, a) People of the State, b) their Constituency, c) their Supporters, or d) their Party. Although we did not restrict their response only to our categories, no other category was mentioned by any MLA. The

---

<sup>3</sup> See Roger Davidson, *The Role of the Congressman* (New York: Pegasus, 1969)

<sup>4</sup> Chong Kim, J Barkan, I Turan and M Jewell, *The Legislative Connection: The Politics of Representation in Kenya, Korea, and Turkey* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1984) Ch.1

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter II. For a detailed discussion, see Peter Gerlich, 'Orientations to Decision-Making in the Vienna City Council' in Samuel Patterson and John Wahlke (Eds.), *Comparative Legislative Behaviour: Frontiers of Research* (New York: John Wiley, 1972)

response as presented below in table VII.1 supports the contention that the role emphasis underlying the typology developed by Wahlke et al. may not be really applicable to a developing country, particularly at provincial levels, and that the main orientations of legislators in this case oscillate around their parties and their constituents, in addition to the unsubstantiated but omnipresent ‘personal interest’.

**Table VII.1**  
**Role Perception of MLAs**  
**Whom do you represent?**

| Whom do You Represent? | Haryana |     | Maharashtra |     | Tamilnadu |     | West Bengal |     | Uttar Pradesh |     | Total |     |
|------------------------|---------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                        | No.     | %   | No.         | %   | No.       | %   | No.         | %   | No.           | %   | No.   | %   |
| People of State        | 5       | 33% | 2           | 5%  | 4         | 10% | 5           | 11% | 7             | 10% | 23    | 11% |
| Constituency           | 6       | 40% | 21          | 50% | 17        | 45% | 10          | 22% | 24            | 36% | 78    | 38% |
| Supporters             | 1       | 7%  | 4           | 10% |           | 0%  |             | 0%  | 2             | 3%  | 7     | 3%  |
| Party                  | 3       | 20% | 15          | 35% | 17        | 45% | 30          | 67% | 34            | 51% | 99    | 48% |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, 40% of legislators stated that they represented mainly their constituencies followed closely (33%) by those who said that they represented people of the entire state. This large, and unexpected, response for the latter was also the highest proportion from all our states and appeared to indicate a relatively wider vision on the part of the Haryana MLAs. One possible reason could be the comparative homogeneity of Haryana and the fact that it is a smallish state both in area and in population.<sup>6</sup> There are thus no significant regional cleavages. One-fifth responded that they were mainly the representatives of their respective parties.

In Maharashtra, one-half of our sample stated that they represented their respective constituencies. The second rank was “party” (35%) indicating a significant loyalty to

---

<sup>6</sup> Haryana’s area (in thousand Km<sup>2</sup>) is 44.21 and its population (in millions) is 16.31. This may be compared to UP’s 294.41 and 139.03 or Maharashtra’s 307.71 and 78.74. (Source: Census of India, 1991, provisional figures)

the party machine. We have already observed in chapter II that Maneesha Arun Tikekar, in her study of SC/ST legislators, labels them *Subordinate-Loyalist* as she found them to be extremely subordinate to their party.<sup>7</sup> Contrasted with Haryana's significant response of "people of state" (33%), only 5% stated so in Maharashtra. It is a much larger state and has strong regional variations.

Tamilnadu was again split between "constituency" and "party" - an equal proportion (45%) of MLAs listing each of these. West Bengal, expectedly due to a large proportion of ruling Left-front in our sample, had a two-thirds majority stating that they mainly represented their party. Over a fifth (22%) MLAs felt that they mainly represented their constituency, a significant proportion in itself, but the lowest among our five states. In Uttar Pradesh, the same pattern was repeated, 51% MLAs responded that they represented their party and 38% said that they represented their constituencies.

Taking all five states into account, we see a clear bias towards "party" among MLAs in West Bengal resulting from a cohesive and strong party identification among the ruling left-front MLAs.

Overall, those who said that they represented their party were about half of the sample and those who responded that they represented their constituency were almost two-fifths. We see that there is hardly any response for "supporters" which includes any interest or pressure groups or for "People of state" which might have indicated concern with a larger arena. Clearly, the Indian MLA is not a *trustee* or *delegate* in

---

<sup>7</sup> Maneesha Arun Tikekar, *Scheduled Caste Legislators in Maharashtra*, op. cit.

Wahlke's terms because representing the "party" appears to be his most important representational role.

#### **MLA as a Representative (Party-wise)**

The party-wise data in this regard are presented in table VII.2 below:

**Table VII.2**  
**Role Perception of MLAs**  
**Whom do you represent?**  
**(Party-wise)**

| <b>Whom do You Represent?</b> | <b>Cong.I</b> |          | <b>CPI(M)</b> |          | <b>BJP</b> |          | <b>DMK</b> |          | <b>Janata Dal</b> |          | <b>Total</b> |          |
|-------------------------------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|-------------------|----------|--------------|----------|
|                               | <b>No.</b>    | <b>%</b> | <b>No.</b>    | <b>%</b> | <b>No.</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>No.</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>No.</b>        | <b>%</b> | <b>No.</b>   | <b>%</b> |
| People of State               | 10            | 19%      | 2             | 6%       | 3          | 8%       | 2          | 11%      | 5                 | 13%      | 22           | 12%      |
| Constituency                  | 28            | 54%      | 3             | 9%       | 6          | 15%      | 5          | 26%      | 22                | 59%      | 64           | 36%      |
| Supporters                    | 1             | 2%       |               | 0%       |            | 0%       |            | 0%       | 2                 | 5%       | 3            | 2%       |
| Party                         | 13            | 25%      | 28            | 85%      | 30         | 77%      | 12         | 63%      | 8                 | 22%      | 91           | 50%      |

Note: N = Cong.I 52, CPI(M) 33, BJP 39, DMK 19, Janata Dal 37, and Total 180.

In Cong.I, a majority of legislators (54%) felt that they mainly represented their constituency. The next highest proportion (25%), about one-half of those who responded "constituency", said that they mainly represented their "party". One-fifth stated that they were representatives of the entire "state". This last proportion is the highest among all parties and reflects a more universal or national culture of Cong.I as opposed to a more inward-looking approach of cadre based parties like CPI(M) or BJP.

In CPI(M), an overwhelming proportion (85%) said that they mainly represented their party. This is a confirmation of their general approach to many of our questions. What we observe is an intense overt loyalty to the party by the legislators of CPI(M) and their reluctance to be seen to have any public opinion that may be construed to be against the expectations of the party.

BJP followed CPI(M) in that 77% of its MLAs stated that they represented their “party”. A small 15% responded that they represented their “constituency”.

In DMK, which again is a cadre based regional party, we observed a similar response. About two-thirds of the legislators said that they mainly represented their “party”. However, a significant 26% stated that they represented their respective “constituencies”.

In Janata Dal we met a different pattern of response more in line with Cong.I. Over one-half of the sample (59%) stated that they represented their “constituencies” (Cong.I. 54%) and 22% felt that they mainly represented their “party” (Cong.I 25%).

Overall, an overwhelming majority of legislators (86%) felt that they either mainly represented their “parties” (50%) or mainly represented their “constituencies” (36%). A clear divide between the centrist catch-all parties, Cong.I and Janata Dal on the one hand, and the more cadre oriented and regional parties on the other is observed. The former are clearly more “constituency” oriented (Cong.I 54%, and Janata Dal 59%), whereas the latter are more “party” oriented (CPI(M) 85%, BJP 77%, and DMK 63%).

#### **MAIN ROLE-BEHAVIOUR OF MLAS**

Our second question was framed to investigate what main role the legislators thought they performed. This was a multiple-choice, not an open ended question, thus avoiding responses such as “serve masses”, “look after the poor” or “oppose the

ruling party”.<sup>8</sup> We explained to the MLAs that we did not wish to know what ‘ideal’ role they would like to perform. We wanted to find out what in their normal working day had become their main job, based on a combination of what they considered to be their most important role and to what in practice they devoted most of their time and effort.

Of course, the main role thus defined is not the sole function that the MLAs perform. They are busy simultaneously with several issues. Simply because a particular MLA responds that looking after his constituents is his main job does not mean that he takes no interest in, for example, the development of his constituency or in supporting his party within and outside the legislature. It simply means that his first priority in performing his daily duties is devoted to looking after his constituents’ direct interest, be it complaints or requests for favours. The data are presented in table VII.3 below:

**Table VII.3**  
**Role Perception of MLAs**  
**What Role do you Mainly Perform?**

| What Role do you Mainly Perform? | Haryana |     | Maharashtra |     | Tamilnadu |     | West Bengal |     | Uttar Pradesh |     | Total |     |
|----------------------------------|---------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                                  | No.     | %   | No.         | %   | No.       | %   | No.         | %   | No.           | %   | No.   | %   |
| Attend to Constituents           | 7       | 47% | 12          | 28% | 7         | 18% | 5           | 11% | 26            | 39% | 57    | 28% |
| Development of Constituency      | 4       | 27% | 4           | 10% | 13        | 34% | 1           | 2%  | 12            | 18% | 28    | 14% |
| Support Party                    | 2       | 13% | 13          | 31% | 13        | 34% | 25          | 56% | 14            | 21% | 73    | 35% |
| Development of State             | 2       | 13% | 10          | 24% | 1         | 3%  | 14          | 31% | 15            | 22% | 42    | 20% |
| Attend to Assembly work          |         | 0%  | 3           | 7%  | 4         | 11% |             | 0%  |               | 0%  | 7     | 3%  |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

<sup>8</sup> Two-fifths (42%) of the sample of P D Sharma, for example, stated that their main role was to “serve masses”. Whether service was meant in a “patronage” sense or in the sense of lending a helping hand to the needy is extremely difficult to establish. Sharma himself offers no definitions. (*The Legislative Elite* op. cit.)

In Haryana, the highest proportion (47%) responded that their main work was to look after the problems of their constituents. About one-quarter responded that their prime role was to promote development of their constituencies. Between these two responses, three-quarters of the Haryana MLAs were covered. We see a divergence in the response of Haryana MLAs between our two questions. One-third of them had responded that they mainly represented the people of their state. But in terms of their actual day-to-day work, only 13% felt that their main effort went towards “development of their state”.

In Maharashtra, a Cong.I-ruled state, we were surprised that the largest proportion (31%) stated that their main role was to support their party policies because Congressmen are not particularly known for their party loyalty. The catch-all nature of the party’s membership has generally meant that strong ideological affinities are missing from its relationship with its legislators.<sup>9</sup> A close second (28%) was attending to the problems of constituents. A significant proportion (24%) said that their main role was the development of the whole state and that they took most interest in this work. This three-way split clearly indicates a low priority for work related to assembly proceedings. As in Haryana, we have a divergence of response pertaining to development of the whole state. To our first question, only 5% of Maharashtra legislators responded that they mainly represented the people of their state. But to the second question, in an inverted image of Haryana, almost a quarter responded that development of the entire state was their main role.

In Tamilnadu the response was divided between one-third “supporting their party” and another third “development of their constituency”. Attending to constituents’

---

<sup>9</sup> See, Stanley Kochanek, *The Congress Party of India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969)

work was rather less at 18%. However, unlike any other state, 11% of the sample in Tamilnadu stated that their main role was to “attend to assembly work”. This, though a low ratio, was the highest from among the five states and perhaps represents a sub-culture which also relates to a higher number of lawyers in the Tamilnadu assembly. This is also the closest response that we found to the Wahlke category of *ritualist*. Tamilnadu legislators were consistent in their response to both our questions; their priority remained their party and their constituents.

In West Bengal, a majority (56%) expectedly stated that their main role was to support their “party”. This response was biased by the opinion of the ruling Left-front from whose ranks three-quarters were in this group. However, a significant 31%, the highest proportion from among our states, responded that their main role was to work toward “development of their state”. This, combined with the responses pertaining to “constituency”, is a strong pointer to a lower degree of involvement in local constituency affairs (attend to constituents 11%, development of constituency 2%) and conversely a higher sensitivity to problems of the state as a whole. It mainly reflects the culture of CPI(M) as seen in party-wise analysis below.

In Uttar Pradesh, we again returned to “errand running”. The highest proportion of MLAs (39%) felt that their main work was attending to their constituents. Many of them complained that this left no time for any other activity, but they were clear that this work had priority over their other roles. A candid expression was the following:<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Translated from Hindi: *Aap poochté hein ki hamara param karya kya hai. Arrey koi samay ho tab hum koi karya karén. Yahan to logo ki aisi bhirh lagi réhti hai ké kuch karné ka samay nahin hai.*



You ask me what role do I perform. But in order to perform anything I should first of all have some time. I have none as I am constantly engulfed by constituents. I can attempt no other work.

Interestingly, the rest of the sample was fairly divided between “development of state” (22%), “support party” (21%), and “development of their constituency” (18%). We see a divergence of response between the first question and the second. In the former case, a majority of Uttar Pradesh MLAs responded that they mainly represent their party; but in the daily work, it was the “errand-boy” role that took clear precedence.

Taking all states into account, the highest proportion of MLAs (35%) felt that their main role was to support their party policies, indicating a distinct subordination to party organisation. The next highest proportion (28%) responded that their main role was to attend to the problems and requests of their constituents. A fair proportion (20%) felt that as elected representatives they were mainly concerned with the development of their state. It clearly appears that the main orientations of state legislators are in terms of “party-support” and “errand-running” for their constituents.

Overall, there is a high orientation towards “errand running” in the two north Indian states, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, contrasted with a minimal “constituency” orientation in West Bengal; a strong sense of constituency developmental orientation in Tamilnadu (See Ch. VI on their practice of printing all developmental details on re-election posters); and, a high party-orientation in West Bengal. While most legislators must perform in varying degrees some of the roles contained in the Wahlke et al. typology, the conceptualization is inadequate for the study of legislative orientations in Indian states.

## Main Role-behaviour of MLAs (Party-wise)

The party-wise response is presented in table VII.4 below:

**Table VII.4**  
**Role Perception of MLAs**  
**What Role do you mainly perform?**  
**(Party-wise)**

| What Role do you Mainly Perform? | Cong.I |     | CPI(M) |     | BJP |     | DMK |     | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|----------------------------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                                  | No.    | %   | No.    | %   | No. | %   | No. | %   | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| Attend to Constituents           | 15     | 29% |        | 0%  | 10  | 26% | 1   | 5%  | 21         | 57% | 47    | 26% |
| Development of Constituency      | 10     | 19% | 1      | 3%  | 2   | 5%  | 6   | 32% | 10         | 27% | 24    | 13% |
| Support Party                    | 3      | 6%  | 25     | 76% | 20  | 51% | 9   | 47% | 2          | 5%  | 66    | 37% |
| Development of State             | 19     | 36% | 7      | 21% | 7   | 18% |     | 0%  | 4          | 11% | 37    | 20% |
| Attend to Assembly work          | 5      | 10% |        | 0%  |     | 0%  | 3   | 16% |            | 0%  | 6     | 3%  |

Note: N = Cong.I 52, CPI(M) 33, BJP 39, DMK 19, Janata Dal 37, and Total 180.

From Cong.I, the largest proportion (36%) felt that the “development of their state” was their main role and that their work in the assembly as well as outside was mainly devoted to this end. The next highest response (29%) was “attending to their constituents”. Almost one-fifth said that “development of their constituency” was their main role and 10% said that “attending to assembly work” was their main role. This last category, though small, corresponds to the *Ritualist* of the Wahlke typology. We see a significant variance in their response to the two questions. In the first instance, a quarter of their sample stated that they mainly represented their party. But to the second question, only 6% responded that their main role was to support the party. Obviously, no conflict is seen in the two responses. Looking after the interests of the constituents does not in any way conflict with representing the party. We see that the representational role perceptions are not necessarily parallel to their claimed role-behaviour. Clearly, the concept of representation is more abstract than the question of what is performed on a daily basis.

Expectedly, of the CPI(M) MLAs three-fourths regarded their main role as supporting their party policies. A significant 21 % felt that their main role was working toward the development of their state. “Attending to constituents” had ‘nil’ response and “development of constituency” had only a marginal one. There could not be a clearer picture of a party’s culture.

Although not to the same extent as CPI(M), MLAs from BJP were also party-oriented and one-half of the sample felt that the main role they performed was to “support their party”. Also, like the CPI(M), 18% of their MLAs said that their main role was “development of their state”. But unlike the CPI(M), 26% of BJP MLAs felt that their main role was to attend to the problems of their constituents. They are placed somewhere between Cong.I and CPI(M).

In DMK too, “supporting the party” (47%) was the dominant response. However, in marked contrast to both CPI(M) and BJP, 32 % of their MLAs said that “development of their constituencies” was their main role. This was the highest response from among all the parties and it corresponded to the political culture of Tamilnadu. During our interviews many MLAs talked about what they had done for their constituencies. Most of them had used large posters to advertise what they claimed to have done for their constituencies. This included financial information on all projects concerned with their constituency.

In Janata Dal a majority (57%) responded that their main role was to “attend to the problems of their constituents”. This is in keeping with their majority response to our first question that they mainly represented their constituency. Just over a quarter, 27%, stated that their main role was the “development of their constituency”. If we combine these two responses, an overwhelming 84% of Janata Dal MLAs were

constituency-oriented, either directly in looking after the constituents or indirectly in the development of the constituency which is ultimately directed at the welfare of the constituents.

Taking all parties into account, the highest proportion (37%), biased by the responses from CPI(M), BJP, and DMK, all cadre based parties, felt that their main role was to support their party. Clearly, most of these legislators felt that they did not have a base of their own and that they needed the support of their parties for their position. The second highest proportion was in favour of “attending to constituents”, the main response for which was spread between Janata Dal, Cong.I, and BJP in that order. “development of state” was the next with Cong.I leading the response, indicating a larger concern than with the interest of their electoral constituency.

#### **VIEWS OF MLAS ON BEING EFFECTIVE IN THEIR “JOB”**

Having established the main role-perception and role-behaviour of our sample, we addressed our last enquiry to investigating whether the MLAs felt that they were *effective* in their “job”. In other words, having come to the assembly with certain expectations of what they could do for their constituents, or indeed for the people of the state as a whole, would they say that they were able to do most or at least many of those things? We did not try to define their job for them, leaving them free to self-define it in their own terms. This being the case, we were surprised that a majority felt that they were not *effective* in their job. Many said that it was a complete waste of time. We also asked them if they thought that ruling party MLAs had some advantage in being *effective* in so far as getting things done for their constituencies was concerned. Here a majority of 60% responded positively. The data pertaining to these two queries are presented in tables VII.5 and VII.6 below:

**Table VII.5**  
**Views of MLAs on their being Effective in their job**

| STATE         | Yes       | %          | No        | %          | Somewhat  | %         | Can be    | %          |
|---------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Haryana       | 4         | 27%        | 8         | 53%        | 1         | 7%        | 2         | 13%        |
| Maharashtra   | 21        | 50%        | 10        | 24%        | 4         | 10%       | 7         | 17%        |
| Tamilnadu     | 22        | 58%        | 10        | 26%        | 2         | 5%        | 4         | 11%        |
| West Bengal   | 11        | 24%        | 16        | 36%        | 2         | 4%        | 16        | 36%        |
| Uttar Pradesh | 13        | 19%        | 24        | 36%        | 5         | 7%        | 25        | 37%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>71</b> | <b>34%</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>33%</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>7%</b> | <b>54</b> | <b>26%</b> |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

**Table VII.6**  
**Are Ruling Party MLAs more Effective than Opposition?**

| STATE         | Yes        | %          | No        | %         | Both Same | %          | None     | %         | Don't Know | %         |
|---------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Haryana       | 14         | 93%        | 1         | 7%        |           | 0%         |          | 0%        |            |           |
| Maharashtra   | 21         | 50%        | 6         | 14%       | 15        | 36%        |          | 0%        |            |           |
| Tamilnadu     | 25         | 66%        | 2         | 5%        | 7         | 18%        | 4        | 11%       |            |           |
| West Bengal   | 25         | 56%        | 0         | 0%        | 14        | 31%        | 4        | 9%        | 2          | 4%        |
| Uttar Pradesh | 39         | 58%        | 1         | 1%        | 24        | 36%        |          | 0%        | 3          | 4%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>124</b> | <b>60%</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>5%</b> | <b>60</b> | <b>29%</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>4%</b> | <b>5</b>   | <b>2%</b> |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, a majority (53%) said that they were not effective in their respective jobs, while just over a quarter (27%) said “yes” they were effective. Those who said “no” came mainly from the ruling party and comprised 75% of this group. Of the ruling party alone, 86% were from this category. This is unique in Haryana, where the ruling party MLAs predominantly say that they are not effective. Having said this, almost all of them (93%) go on to say that the ruling party MLAs are placed in a comparatively advantageous position in order to be effective. Clearly, if 86% of the ruling party sample feel that even though they are at an advantage compared to the opposition they are not effective, then the opposition MLAs should perceive themselves to be worse off. But this is not entirely the case, as 37% of the opposition

MLAs responded that they were effective in their job. Nonetheless, 87% of the opposition MLAs agreed that the ruling party MLAs had an advantage over the opposition. This response is clearly based on their expectations of achievements in their respective jobs. The opposition assumes that their prospects are generally poor, and therefore even with a low level of activity and result they feel that they are useful.

In Maharashtra, half the sample said that they were effective in their job and this feeling cut across party lines to a large extent - 59% of the ruling party MLAs and 40% of the opposition. Again a significant 24% who said that an MLA was not effective came equally from both sides. On the question whether the ruling party MLAs were at an advantage, there was an affirmative response, and this too cut across party lines. Surprisingly, 25% MLAs of opposition parties said that ruling party MLAs were not necessarily more effective, and that in fact it was the opposition who had an edge particularly during debates in the assembly. This pattern of response is in keeping with the political culture of Maharashtra. The MLAs here feel that they are playing some productive role irrespective of whether they belong to the ruling party or to the opposition. This is further evidenced by the fact that 36% of the total sample of MLAs from Maharashtra said that MLAs from ruling parties as well as from the opposition were equally effective in doing their job. This group insisted that the political system did not get in the way of the opposition by unduly favouring the ruling party legislators.

In Tamilnadu, 58% of the MLAs said that they were generally effective in their job, and this response came from both ruling as well as opposition MLAs. In respective proportions from their own ranks, 64% of the ruling party and 50% from the opposition said "yes" they were effective. Of the total sample in Tamilnadu, 24%

said that they were not effective, and here again the response cut across party lines. There appeared to be agreement among MLAs that the ruling party legislators had an advantage over those from the opposition, as 66% of the MLAs said so. In this case while 50% of the ruling party MLAs endorsed this view, a much larger 87% from the opposition echoed this sentiment. The opposition clearly felt that the government did not pay much attention to them.

West Bengal was a surprise in that only 24% of the MLAs said in a clear way that they were effective in their job. 36% said that they were “not” effective. Even in terms of proportions from the two sides of the House, only 31% of the MLAs from the ruling left-front, and none from the opposition, said that they were effective. The general position taken by the latter was that the left-front government did not permit the opposition, which was mainly Cong.I, to work in any constructive way at all. At the same time a significant 19% from the ruling left-front also said that they were not effective. 36% of the sample, and all from the ruling left-front (constituting 44% of their MLAs in our sample), said that an MLA “can be” effective if he wants to be. In other words, the system does not place any obstacles in his way and if he wishes to work productively he certainly can do so. The majority in this group were MLAs for the first time and therefore could not categorically say whether they were going to be effective; but they felt that there was no reason to feel pessimistic on this score. On the question of whether the ruling party MLAs had an advantage over the opposition, 56% agreed and this opinion cut across party lines and included an equal proportion of response from both sides. Considering the political relationship between the ruling left-front and the opposition, a significant proportion of 44% from the opposition side said that the ruling party MLAs did not necessarily have any advantage over the opposition and that both were comparable in so far as their being

effective was concerned. This is at variance with their own total response (of 100%) that the MLAs are not effective in their job.

In Uttar Pradesh, only 19% of the sample said that they were effective in their job. This response generally cut across party lines and 24% and 16% respectively of the ruling and the opposition members agreed. As opposed to this, 36% said that they were not effective. In this case, however, the response was dominated by the opposition members, of whom 47% said so. Significantly 37% of the sample, in line with the response in West Bengal, said that an MLA “can be” effective if he tries - 51% from the ranks of the ruling party and 26% from opposition. A majority of the MLAs also said that the members of the ruling party had an advantage over the members of opposition where effectiveness in getting things done was concerned - 48% of the ruling and 64% of the opposition responded in this way. But almost 45% of the ruling party members said that there was no difference between MLAs of the two sides and both could be equally effective; 29% of the opposition MLAs agreed. We can see that the picture is not so pessimistic in Uttar Pradesh and there seems a general feeling that a legislator can perform a useful and productive function without the system hampering him much.

For all our states together we found an evenly split opinion. A third of the MLAs interviewed felt that they were effective, while another third disagreed. Both these opinions ran across party lines although there was a slight bias in the former towards the opinion of the ruling party MLAs (38% of their total against 27% of the opposition), and towards the opinion of the opposition in the latter (43% against 24% of the ruling party). A significant proportion (26%) said that being effective or not depended on the member himself: if he was committed and sincere towards his responsibility then he “could be” effective. This opinion too ran across party lines,



with 29% of the ruling parties and 22% of the opposition being in this group. This is what helps clarify the fact that there is a slight tilt in favour of the opinion that an MLA is, or can be, effective and that the system does not entirely put obstacles in his way. Whether MLAs from the ruling party have any advantage over the opposition met agreement from a majority of 60%, across parties. But a significant 29% said that both had the same opportunity, and this opinion too came from both sides - 32% of the ruling parties and 25% of the opposition.

### **Views of MLAs on their being effective in their “job” (Party-wise)**

The party-wise data are presented in tables VII.7 and VII.8 below:

**Table VII.7**  
**Views of MLAs on their**  
**being Effective in their job**  
**(Party-wise)**

| <b>PARTY</b> | <b>Yes</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>No</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>Somewhat</b> | <b>%</b>  | <b>Can be</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| Cong.I       | 19         | 37%        | 24        | 46%        | 4               | 8%        | 5             | 10%        |
| CPI(M)       | 13         | 39%        | 6         | 18%        | 2               | 6%        | 12            | 36%        |
| BJP          | 10         | 26%        | 10        | 26%        | 1               | 3%        | 17            | 44%        |
| DMK          | 14         | 74%        | 3         | 16%        | 2               | 11%       | 0             | 0%         |
| Janata Dal   | 6          | 16%        | 16        | 43%        | 4               | 11%       | 11            | 30%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>62</b>  | <b>34%</b> | <b>58</b> | <b>32%</b> | <b>13</b>       | <b>7%</b> | <b>45</b>     | <b>25%</b> |

Note: N = Cong.I 52, CPI(M) 33, BJP 39, DMK 19, Janata Dal 37, and Total 180.

**Table VII.8**  
**Are Ruling Party MLAs More**  
**Effective than Opposition?**  
**(Party-wise)**

| <b>PARTY</b> | <b>Yes</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>No</b> | <b>%</b>  | <b>Both Same</b> | <b>%</b>   | <b>None</b> | <b>%</b>  | <b>Don't Know</b> | <b>%</b>  |
|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| Cong.I       | 35         | 67%        | 3         | 6%        | 13               | 25%        |             | 0%        | 1                 | 2%        |
| CPI(M)       | 20         | 61%        | 0         | 0%        | 9                | 27%        |             | 0%        | 4                 | 12%       |
| BJP          | 22         | 56%        | 0         | 0%        | 15               | 38%        | 0           | 0%        | 2                 | 5%        |
| DMK          | 10         | 53%        | 1         | 5%        | 6                | 32%        | 1           | 5%        | 1                 | 5%        |
| Janata Dal   | 23         | 62%        | 5         | 14%       | 8                | 22%        |             | 0%        | 1                 | 3%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>110</b> | <b>61%</b> | <b>9</b>  | <b>5%</b> | <b>51</b>        | <b>28%</b> | <b>1</b>    | <b>1%</b> | <b>9</b>          | <b>5%</b> |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

In Cong.I, 37% of the sample said “yes” they were effective in their respective jobs but a majority (46%) disagreed. To the question whether ruling party MLAs were generally more effective than the opposition MLAs, two-thirds (67%) agreed.

CPI(M) presented a better picture, a majority (39%) stating that they were effective in their job. A further 36% said that an MLA is only effective if he works to be effective. In other words, the system does not hamper him. To the question whether ruling party MLAs were more effective, 61% said “yes”.

A majority of BJP MLAs (44%) stated that MLAs “can be” effective if they worked hard and with commitment and that the system did not hamper their working. A quarter (26%) stated that they were effective, while an equal proportion took the opposing stand and declared that they were not effective. In general the BJP opinion was favourable to the idea that a legislator was effective in his “job”. To the question whether the ruling party MLAs have an advantage, 56% of the BJP legislators answered in the affirmative.

DMK was way ahead of all other parties in that three-quarters of its legislators said that MLAs were generally effective in their job. This high proportion was way above the second largest proportion - CPI(M)'s 39%. To the question whether ruling party MLAs had an advantage over the opposition, a majority (53%) said "yes".

Like Cong.I, a majority (43%) in Janata Dal, expressed the view that the MLAs were not effective in their job. However, a significant proportion (30%) said that the MLAs "can be" effective if they tried and if they worked towards it. Adding this response to those who stated that the MLAs were effective (16%), we get a slight majority (46%) of MLAs who feel positively about the issue.

Overall, taking all parties into account, there were no special differences in the response of MLAs from the five different parties except that DMK stood alone in its relatively larger support for the effectiveness of MLAs. There was a general consensus that ruling party MLAs have an advantage over the opposition in getting things done.

## VIII. SOCIAL STATUS OF MLAs

In Chapter I we have argued that MLAs, as a component of intermediate elite in India, are a critical link in the process of elite-mass integration. This argument was based on the fact that MLAs are generally politically *bilingual*, speaking both the 'modern' and the 'traditional' languages of politics, and therefore they are strategically placed to mediate between the base and the apex of the polity. In this chapter we investigate two specific issues that help to elucidate whether MLAs indeed occupy this vantage point.

The first is the self-perception of MLAs related to their social status *after* they were elected to the assembly. We know that rural India is highly hierarchical and social status considerations, based primarily on caste, are a critical determinant of behavioural patterns in the society.<sup>1</sup> Arguably, therefore, the area of MLAs' influence increases with an elevation of their social status through both a greater social acceptance of their position irrespective of their caste, and simultaneously a recognition of their access to patronage.<sup>2</sup> We also relate this question to the degeneration of political culture in India, much talked about in the media and generally accepted as given in the political discourse in India.<sup>3</sup> We discuss below in Chapter XIII that our sample of MLAs overwhelmingly affirmed that politics in India had become progressively corrupt. We sought to find out if the legislators felt the

---

<sup>1</sup> See Yogindra Singh, 'Changing Pattern of Social Stratification in India' in M N Srinivas et.al., (Eds.) *Dimensions of Social Change in India* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Singh argues that while the social base for status allocation is still caste, economic and political reasons help transcend the caste barrier.

<sup>3</sup> This is a recurring theme revolving around corruption, defections, electoral violence and unbecoming behaviour even in the Parliament and state assemblies. See, for example, M P Singh (Ed.), *Lok Sabha Elections 1989: Indian Politics in 1990s* (Delhi: Kalinga Publications, 1992); J R Siwach, *Dynamics of Indian Government and Politics* op. cit., especially Part II.

pressure of this opinion on their activities and status, and whether they regarded the social acceptability of politicians to be on the wane in their respective states. Two questions were asked: first, whether they believed that their social status had improved as a result of having been elected to the assembly; and second, if they thought there would be any change in this social status in the foreseeable future.

Next, we attempted to establish how deeply they were immersed in state-level politics by enquiring whether they, as politicians, would prefer to contest for the Lok Sabha if given the opportunity. We also did this in two ways: first, by asking them that, if they had a choice, would they prefer to contest Lok Sabha or their own state assembly; and second, by enquiring whether they felt that the status of an MP was higher than that of an MLA.

#### **MLAS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR SOCIAL STATUS**

The data pertaining to this query are presented in table VIII.1 below:

**Table VIII.1**  
**MLAs' Perception of**  
**their Own Social Status**

| Since becoming an MLA has your social status improved or worsened or remained essentially same? |          |         |          |         |      |         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|---------|------|---------|
| STATE                                                                                           | Improved | Percent | Worsened | Percent | Same | Percent |
| Haryana                                                                                         | 12       | 80%     | 1        | 7%      | 2    | 13%     |
| Maharashtra                                                                                     | 35       | 83%     | 1        | 2%      | 6    | 14%     |
| TamilNadu                                                                                       | 28       | 74%     | 1        | 3%      | 9    | 24%     |
| West Bengal                                                                                     | 31       | 69%     | 0        | 0%      | 14   | 31%     |
| Uttar Pradesh                                                                                   | 51       | 76%     | 3        | 4%      | 13   | 19%     |
| TOTAL                                                                                           | 157      | 76%     | 6        | 3%      | 44   | 21%     |

| When asked if they expected this trend for better status to continue in the future |                   |         |                  |         |                   |         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| STATE                                                                              | Likely to Improve |         | Likely to Worsen |         | Likely to be Same |         |
|                                                                                    | No.               | Percent | No.              | Percent | No.               | Percent |
| Haryana                                                                            | 11                | 73%     | 2                | 13%     | 2                 | 13%     |
| Maharashtra                                                                        | 33                | 79%     | 1                | 2%      | 8                 | 19%     |
| TamilNadu                                                                          | 26                | 68%     | 2                | 5%      | 10                | 26%     |
| West Bengal                                                                        | 32                | 71%     | 0                | 0%      | 13                | 29%     |
| Uttar Pradesh                                                                      | 40                | 60%     | 13               | 19%     | 14                | 21%     |
| TOTAL                                                                              | 142               | 69%     | 18               | 9%      | 47                | 23%     |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

A general response from all states was that MLAs perceived their social status to have improved after being elected. In Maharashtra 83 %, in Haryana 80 %, in Uttar Pradesh 76 %, in Tamilnadu 74 %, and even in leftist West Bengal 69 % were in this category. This response cut across party lines and therefore it is viewed as a general response of the MLAs. This general perception on the part of MLAs clearly added prestige and social honour to the position.

Even to the second question, whether they thought that this social esteem would continue in the foreseeable future, the general response was positive. We note, however, that two North-Indian states, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, both had a

relatively higher response compared to other states that the future social status of MLAs might be poorer - 13% of the respondents in Haryana and 19% in UP. One particular legislator in Haryana commented:

You wait and see, in future when people see a politician on the road they will lynch him. Politicians should be prohibited from going to villages.

It is interesting to note that most of those who responded that the future social status of the legislators was likely to be poorer had answered the first question positively that their status had improved. This hints at a probability that they were concerned about the declining ethical and moral standards in politics and sensed that their constituents were getting restive on this score.

The results present a paradox. On the one hand, the legislators themselves overwhelmingly agree that politics in India has acquired a reputation of being corrupt, and that this decline in moral and ethical standards is likely to continue within the current political system.<sup>4</sup> And yet, they also overwhelmingly proclaim that their personal social status, after having been elected to the assembly, had improved. This might be an indication of how declining ethical standards in politics have been condoned by the society, allowing many politicians to further disregard what may be termed as honest and ethical conduct.

#### **Perception by MLAs of their Social Status (Party-wise)**

The party-wise data in this regard are presented in table VIII.2 below:

---

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter XIII

**Table VIII.2**  
**MLAs' perception of their own Social Status**  
**(Party-wise)**

| <b>Since becoming an MLA has your Social Status improved or worsened or remained essentially same?</b> |                 |            |                 |           |             |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| <b>PARTY</b>                                                                                           | <b>Improved</b> |            | <b>Worsened</b> |           | <b>Same</b> |            |
|                                                                                                        | <b>No.</b>      | <b>%</b>   | <b>No.</b>      | <b>%</b>  | <b>No.</b>  | <b>%</b>   |
| Cong.I                                                                                                 | 37              | 71%        | 1               | 2%        | 14          | 27%        |
| CPI(M)                                                                                                 | 24              | 73%        | 0               | 0%        | 9           | 27%        |
| BJP                                                                                                    | 32              | 82%        | 3               | 8%        | 4           | 10%        |
| DMK                                                                                                    | 15              | 79%        | 0               | 0%        | 4           | 21%        |
| Janata Dal                                                                                             | 30              | 81%        | 0               | 0%        | 7           | 19%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                                           | <b>138</b>      | <b>77%</b> | <b>4</b>        | <b>2%</b> | <b>38</b>   | <b>21%</b> |

| <b>When asked if they expected this trend for better Status to continue in the future</b> |                         |                |                        |                |                         |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| <b>PARTY</b>                                                                              | <b>Likelyto improve</b> |                | <b>Likelyto worsen</b> |                | <b>Likelyto be same</b> |                |
|                                                                                           | <b>No.</b>              | <b>Percent</b> | <b>No.</b>             | <b>Percent</b> | <b>No.</b>              | <b>Percent</b> |
| Cong.I                                                                                    | 31                      | 60%            | 5                      | 10%            | 16                      | 31%            |
| CPI(M)                                                                                    | 25                      | 76%            | 0                      | 0%             | 8                       | 24%            |
| BJP                                                                                       | 28                      | 72%            | 5                      | 13%            | 6                       | 15%            |
| DMK                                                                                       | 15                      | 79%            | 0                      | 0%             | 4                       | 21%            |
| Janata Dal                                                                                | 25                      | 68%            | 6                      | 16%            | 6                       | 16%            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                                              | <b>124</b>              | <b>69%</b>     | <b>16</b>              | <b>9%</b>      | <b>40</b>               | <b>22%</b>     |

Note: N = Cong.I 52, CPI(M) 33, BJP 39, DMK 19, Janata Dal 37, and Total 180.

The answer to the first question from all the legislators, irrespective of their party affiliation, was a general affirmation that their status had improved as a result of having been elected to the state legislative assembly. The overall ratio was 77% and the spread between the highest and the lowest party was 82% to 71%.

What is interesting, however, is that not all viewed the future with the same optimism. For CPI(M) and DMK there was hardly any perceptible difference in the response relating to current status and the perceived future status. But we found that the Cong.I MLAs were not all optimistic in the same way. About 11% changed their answer to say that the future status would be worse as politicians were fast losing



credibility. From Janata Dal 13% changed their answer to suggest a poorer future for the status of the MLAs. Nevertheless, the overall feeling of most MLAs, across party lines, was that their status in general had improved and that the situation was likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

We have already stated that the results present a paradox. On the one hand, the legislators themselves recognise the declining standards of politics in India, and yet, they also overwhelmingly proclaim that their personal social status after having been elected to the assembly has improved. This perception is obviously strengthened by their expanding circle of influence. This indicates that MLAs have an important position in the society. It also reinforces the argument that they are crucial agents of integration (or otherwise).

#### **STATE ASSEMBLY OR NATIONAL PARLIAMENT**

Our second enquiry, linked to how the MLAs perceived their social status, was that given a choice would they still be inclined to remain in state-level politics as MLAs, or would they prefer to contest elections for Lok Sabha. We also asked them if they thought that the status of the MPs was in some way higher than that of MLAs. This is important with reference to the response of MLAs that their social status had improved as a result of their being elected to the state assembly. The data are given below in tables VIII.3 and VIII.4:

**Table VIII.3**  
**Given a choice would most MLAs contest**  
**the Lok Sabha or the State Assembly**

| STATE         | Contest<br>Assembly | %   | Contest<br>Lok-Sabha | %   | Don't<br>Know | %  | None | %   | Party.<br>decides | %   |
|---------------|---------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|---------------|----|------|-----|-------------------|-----|
| Haryana       | 8                   | 53% | 5                    | 33% | 1             | 7% | 1    | 7%  |                   |     |
| Maharashtra   | 28                  | 67% | 7                    | 17% | 3             | 7% | 4    | 10% |                   |     |
| Tamilnadu     | 14                  | 37% | 20                   | 53% | 2             | 5% | 2    | 5%  |                   |     |
| West Bengal   | 15                  | 33% | 7                    | 16% | 0             | 0% | 3    | 7%  | 20                | 44% |
| Uttar Pradesh | 30                  | 45% | 18                   | 27% | 2             | 3% | 5    | 7%  | 12                | 18% |
| TOTAL         | 95                  | 46% | 57                   | 28% | 8             | 4% | 15   | 7%  | 32                | 15% |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

**Table VIII.4**  
**When asked whether the status of**  
**an MP was higher than that of an MLA**

| STATE         | Lok Sabha<br>Higher |     | Assembly<br>Higher |     | No comment/<br>Don't Know |     | None |    | Both are<br>Same |     |
|---------------|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|------|----|------------------|-----|
|               | No.                 | %   | No.                | %   | No.                       | %   | No.  | %  | No.              | %   |
| Haryana       | 12                  | 80% | 2                  | 13% | 1                         | 7%  |      | 0% |                  | 0%  |
| Maharashtra   | 22                  | 52% | 9                  | 21% | 5                         | 12% | 1    | 2% |                  | 0%  |
| TamilNadu     | 29                  | 76% | 4                  | 11% | 4                         | 11% |      | 0% |                  | 0%  |
| West Bengal   | 18                  | 40% | 2                  | 4%  | 20                        | 44% |      | 0% | 5                | 11% |
| Uttar Pradesh | 37                  | 55% | 12                 | 18% | 8                         | 12% |      | 0% | 10               | 15% |
| TOTAL         | 118                 | 57% | 29                 | 14% | 38                        | 18% | 1    | 0% | 15               | 7%  |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, 53% of the MLAs responded that they would contest the state assembly given a choice. The main reason for this preference, in the light of qualitative information, was that they wished to work in a smaller constituency where they could interact with local people and be able to serve their needs. One-third of the Haryana MLAs interviewed stated that they would prefer to contest the Lok Sabha. However, a massive majority (80%) felt that the political and social status of the MP was better than an MLA - 100% from the ruling party and 62% from the opposition.

In Maharashtra, 67% of the MLAs said that they would prefer to contest the state assembly and this response cut across party lines - 64% of the ruling party and 70% of the opposition. Only 17% said that they would prefer Lok Sabha and these were also from both sides without any noticeable bias in favour of either ruling or opposition. In terms of the status of the MPs vis-a-vis the MLAs, 52% said that the status of the MP was higher. This response too cut across party lines, indicating that this was the general feeling of the legislators.

In Tamilnadu, only 37% said that they would prefer to contest the assembly and this figure had a higher than proportionate share of the ruling party MLAs who comprised 71% of this group. From among their own ranks, 45% of the ruling party MLAs stated this as their view. An equal proportion from within the ruling party, however, said that they would prefer to contest Lok Sabha. From the ranks of opposition this proportion was 62%, making an overall 53% from the state of Tamilnadu who preferred the national parliament to their state assembly. This may reflect an underlying more cosmopolitan attitude of the Tamilnadu legislators. In keeping with this information, 76% of the Tamilnadu MLAs said that the status of the MPs was higher as compared to MLAs. This response cut across the party lines.

The highest proportion in the state of West Bengal (44%) offered no comment to this question. All the MLAs who did not answer this question belonged to the ruling Left-front, and from within the ruling Left-front their proportion was 56%. All these MLAs said that they would contest elections according to their *party directives* and that they had no preference of their own. These members did not feel free to indicate any particular preference which might clash with what the party had to say. The same proportion (56%) of the ruling Left-front members in our sample also did not offer any comment to the question whether they thought that the status of the MP was in

any way better than an MLA's. They were unwilling to commit themselves, even indirectly. MLAs who indicated a preference for contesting assembly elections were 33% of the sample in West Bengal, comprising 28% from the ranks of the ruling Left-front and 56% from the opposition. Although only a small overall proportion (16%) said that they would prefer Lok Sabha, 44% of the MLAs from the opposition were in this group. The same 28% from the ruling party also said that the status of the MP was higher than an MLA, whereas 89% of MLAs from the opposition endorsed this view. This pattern of response is representative of the Left-front culture led by CPI(M). This is discussed separately in the party-wise analysis below.

In Uttar Pradesh, 45% of the MLAs said that they would prefer to contest assembly and this response cut across party lines. While 59% of the ruling party members conveyed this view, 53% of the ones from opposition also echoed the same. One-quarter of our sample said that they preferred Lok Sabha and the bulk of these came from the opposition benches. Judging from their response to us, this does not reflect any specific state-level loyalty of the ruling party members (BJP), but it is due to the fact that most members of the ruling party had been elected for the first time and they were not yet ready to think of anything beyond their state. On the question of the status of MLAs compared to MPs, 55% of the MLAs in Uttar Pradesh believed that an MP's status was higher, and this response cut across party lines equally.

Taking all states into account, we see that almost half the MLAs still preferred to contest their state assemblies as many of them put the national parliament beyond their financial and intellectual reach. Only 28% said that they would prefer to contest Lok Sabha. A majority of them (57%) however felt that an MP had a higher status which ordinarily should have made contesting Lok Sabha attractive for them. In West Bengal, MLAs from the ruling Left-front were reluctant to answer this question

because of their party discipline and sub-culture, which prohibits them from actively seeking any specific political position.

#### State Assembly or National Parliament (Party-wise)

The party-wise data are given below in tables VIII.5 and VIII.6:

**Table VIII.5**  
Given a choice would most  
MLAs contest election for the  
Lok-Sabha or for the State Assembly  
(Party-wise)

| PARTY      | Contest<br>Assembly |     | Contest<br>Lok Sabha |     | Don't<br>Know |     | None |     | Party<br>Decides |     |
|------------|---------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|---------------|-----|------|-----|------------------|-----|
|            | No.                 | %   | No.                  | %   | No.           | %   | No.  | %   | No.              | %   |
| Cong.I     | 28                  | 54% | 20                   | 38% | 0             | 0%  | 3    | 6%  | 1                | 2%  |
| CPI(M)     | 7                   | 21% | 3                    | 9%  | 4             | 12% | 4    | 12% | 15               | 45% |
| BJP        | 17                  | 44% | 8                    | 21% | 2             | 5%  | 2    | 5%  | 10               | 26% |
| DMK        | 10                  | 53% | 8                    | 42% | 1             | 5%  | 0    | 0%  | 0                | 0%  |
| Janata Dal | 18                  | 49% | 12                   | 32% | 2             | 5%  | 3    | 8%  | 2                | 5%  |
| TOTAL      | 80                  | 44% | 51                   | 28% | 9             | 5%  | 12   | 7%  | 28               | 16% |

**Table VIII.6**  
When asked whether the status of  
an MP was higher than that of an MLA

| PARTY      | Lok-Sabha is<br>Higher |     | Assembly is<br>Higher |     | No comment/<br>Don't Know |     | None of the<br>two |    | Both are<br>same |     |
|------------|------------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|--------------------|----|------------------|-----|
|            | No.                    | %   | No.                   | %   | No.                       | %   | No.                | %  | No.              | %   |
| Cong.I     | 34                     | 65% | 9                     | 17% | 4                         | 8%  | 1                  | 2% | 4                | 8%  |
| CPI(M)     | 6                      | 18% | 1                     | 3%  | 20                        | 61% | 0                  | 0% | 6                | 18% |
| BJP        | 23                     | 59% | 6                     | 15% | 4                         | 10% | 0                  | 0% | 6                | 15% |
| DMK        | 14                     | 74% | 2                     | 11% | 2                         | 11% | 0                  | 0% | 1                | 5%  |
| Janata Dal | 21                     | 57% | 7                     | 19% | 6                         | 16% | 0                  | 0% | 3                | 8%  |
| TOTAL      | 98                     | 54% | 25                    | 14% | 36                        | 20% | 1                  | 1% | 20               | 11% |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

From Cong.I, 54% of the MLAs responded that given a choice they would contest the state assembly. The main reason for this preference was that they wanted to work

in a smaller area where they could interact with the local people and be able to serve their needs. A smaller 38% said that they would prefer to contest Lok Sabha. But an impressive majority of 65% said that the status of an MP was higher than that of an MLA. The picture is like this: 16% more MLAs stated that they would prefer to contest the state assembly but 48% more MLAs thought that the status of an MP was higher than that of an MLA. When we link this response pattern to the response of the MLAs regarding their status (table VIII.1) we infer that most of the MLAs of Cong.I are more at home with the assembly and unsure of coping with parliament. There is one other compelling reason. The costs of election having increased to high levels, not all politicians can hope to generate the amount of money it takes to contest the Lok Sabha. We know that the Cong.I politicians have to generate finance themselves (Chapter IX). Therefore, even when a higher status is attached to the position of the MP, not all can hope to contest.

The MLAs from CPI(M) were a category by themselves. A majority (45%) stated that their party decided and that they had no opinion in the matter. No matter how much they were coaxed to give their personal opinion, they stuck to their statement. This demonstrates a strong party discipline, where a majority of individual members do not wish to be seen to say anything that may have some chance of being construed as contrary to the party line. Even to the relatively innocuous question whether they thought that the status of an MP was higher than that of an MLA, 61% of the CPI(M) MLAs did not provide an answer. Only 18% said that the status of an MLA was higher and an equal proportion said that both were the same.

Despite a majority of its MLAs (44%) stating that they would prefer state assembly to national parliament, BJP showed a culture similar to CPI(M) in that 26% of its MLAs said that their party decided such issues and that they had no opinion in this

matter. To the question whether they thought that the status of MPs was higher than that of MLAs, a majority of 59% agreed. In the case of BJP while 12% more MLAs stated that given a choice they would contest assembly rather than parliament, 44% more MLAs said that the status of the MPs was higher. Most MLAs of BJP said that they did not yet wish to think in terms of contesting for the Lok Sabha because they were new legislators and felt that they had to get some experience before thinking in terms of the national parliament.

In DMK, once again a majority of the legislators (53%) stated that given a choice they would prefer to contest the state assembly. Despite being a regional and to some extent a cadre based party, there was not even a single legislator from this party who emulated CPI(M) legislators in responding that he had no opinion in the matter because his party decided such issues. A significantly large proportion of MLAs (42%) from DMK said that given a choice they would contest Lok Sabha. This response pattern also reflects the fact that at 74%, a substantial majority and the largest among all our states, of the DMK MLAs expressed the view that the status of an MP was higher than that of an MLA. It is perhaps indicative of a culture that supports a wider outlook, despite DMK being a regional party with its power base in one single state of the Indian Union.

In line with the response pattern of the Cong.I, a majority of Janata Dal MLAs (49%) also demonstrated a preference for contesting state assembly rather than the national parliament. But a significant proportion (32%) opted for the parliament. To the question whether the status of an MP was in some way higher than that of an MLA, 57% of the Janata Dal MLAs said “yes”. Clearly, in line with the response from Cong.I, most Janata Dal legislators put Lok Sabha beyond their financial and intellectual reach.

Overall, we see that a majority of MLAs in every party still preferred to contest their state assemblies, as many of them put the national parliament beyond their financial and mental reach. The exception is CPI(M) where a majority of the legislators did not give an answer to this question, stating only that their party decides and that they had no opinion in the matter.

The response to these questions, both at state and at party levels, appears to reaffirm our argument that MLAs are truly state-level elite. Even when most accept that the political and social position of an MP is higher than their own position, a majority still prefers to stay on in state politics. While on the one hand, this might indicate that many of them place the Lok Sabha beyond their financial means in the light of elections having become very expensive, on the other it is perhaps also represents that they are closer to the 'traditional' language of politics and more at home in their own state surroundings. This supports the contention that the MLAs occupy a strategic position in the process of vertical integration and vice-versa.



## IX. GENERAL

There were three general issues which we explored in our interviews with MLAs. First, we asked them about the sources of funds for meeting the expenses of their election campaign. Increasingly expensive elections and the role of unaccounted money in financing them are often blamed for bolstering political corruption in India.<sup>1</sup>

Second, we examined how well travelled the MLAs are, and third, what news media they generally read for their information. The purpose behind these two was to carry forward the investigation into whether the MLAs' knowledge, experience and interest extended beyond their constituency and state to the rest of India. It stands to reason that there would be a correlation between the media read and the orientation of the MLAs as regards local affairs or a wider perspective.

### SOURCES OF FINANCE FOR ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Indian electoral laws have certain limits for election expenses but it is common knowledge that these limits are never honoured.<sup>2</sup> In some ways this is not peculiarly an Indian problem. One of the problems faced by several democracies is the ever inflating price-tag attached to elections. In the United States the estimated campaign expenditure of the 1987-1988 election cycle - federal, state and local - was estimated to be US\$ 2.7 billion. The 1988 Presidential election alone had a price tag of US\$

---

<sup>1</sup> See R P Bhalla, 'The Electoral System, Its operation and Implications for Democracy in India' in M P Singh (Ed.) *Lok Sabha Elections 1989: Indian Politics in 1990s* op. cit. See also Shriram Maheshwari, *Political Development in India* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1984)

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, D R Pendse, 'Deteriorating Situation' in *Seminar*, March 1983; see also, *India Today*, April 30, 1991. p. 52-53

500 million, up from US\$ 325 million in 1984.<sup>3</sup> Brooks Jackson, in a detailed analysis of the role of big money in the political process calls it, “Money is what it is all about”.<sup>4</sup>

In India too, elections have progressively become more expensive to contest which often forces political parties to look for candidates who can raise their own finances. Due to the fact that most candidates spend far more than the legal level permitted which, if proved, can get them disqualified, it was not possible for us to get a truthful response from the candidates to the question regarding how much they spent on their election campaign. Informally, we were told that MLAs have to spend anywhere between Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 lakhs (US\$ 0.3 to 0.5 million) which is well over twenty times the legal limit.<sup>5</sup> In India this is a great deal of money, as may be illustrated by the fact that it would take a regular white-collar middle-level executive twenty years to earn that much salary. Clearly, therefore, this money has to be generated through undeclared means or what is commonly known in India as “black money”. For example, D R Pendse estimates that Rs. 170 crores (1.7 billion) of black money was used in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections.<sup>6</sup> We therefore formed our question to ask from MLAs the *sources* of this finance and not the *amount*. In this multiple choice question, four response categories were suggested, namely, a) collections from the

---

<sup>3</sup> Herbert E Alexander and Monica Bauer, *Financing The 1988 Election* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991) p. 13

<sup>4</sup> Brooks Jackson, *Honest Graft*, (Washington D.C.: Farragut Publishing, 1990) p.186

<sup>5</sup> The limit for an Assembly constituency, in the larger states, is only Rs. 50,000. Smaller states have even lower limits. (Source: ‘Electoral Reforms 1984’ in *Indian Journal of Public Administration* Vol.37, No.3, July-Sept. 1991). These limits are unrealistic and are hardly ever honoured. Most candidates from major parties spend over Rs. 1 million.

<sup>6</sup> D R Pendse, ‘Deteriorating Situation’ in *Seminar*, March, 1983.

public;<sup>7</sup> b) party funds;<sup>8</sup> c) personal funds; and, d) local business donations. The purpose was to find out whether most MLAs have to use personal funds in order to contest elections, because if it is so then most of them also need to make sure that they recover these personal funds in some way. Our findings are presented in table IX.1 below:

**Table IX.1**  
**Sources of Finance**  
**for Election Campaign**

| STATE         | Collections<br>from Public | %          | Personal<br>Funds | %          | Party<br>Donations | %          | Business<br>Donations | %          |
|---------------|----------------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Haryana       | 15                         | 100%       | 8                 | 53%        | 7                  | 47%        | 4                     | 27%        |
| Maharashtra   | 33                         | 79%        | 25                | 60%        | 16                 | 38%        | 7                     | 17%        |
| TamilNadu     | 24                         | 63%        | 25                | 66%        | 24                 | 63%        | 9                     | 24%        |
| West Bengal   | 40                         | 89%        | 9                 | 20%        | 44                 | 98%        | 1                     | 2%         |
| Uttar Pradesh | 60                         | 90%        | 46                | 69%        | 47                 | 70%        | 2                     | 3%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>172</b>                 | <b>83%</b> | <b>113</b>        | <b>55%</b> | <b>138</b>         | <b>67%</b> | <b>23</b>             | <b>11%</b> |

N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response

<sup>7</sup> The collections from the public can be voluntary or coercive depending upon the culture of the party and of the candidate involved. Some of this money is generated by intimidation, if the candidate is a known bully, and some of it is by intimidation by the party thugs (as is alleged in the case of CPI(M) by their rivals particularly by Cong.I in West Bengal). In Haryana, for example, during 1989/90 elections, a whole lot of lumpen element by the name of 'Green Brigade' associated with Devi Lal's son Chautala, went around threatening industrialists and businessmen with dire consequences unless they contributed a certain percentage of their business turnover to Janata Dal. On the other hand, there were other examples of MLAs in Maharashtra and West Bengal whose political workers had genuinely collected small amounts from people. They simply went from door to door asking for donations. It is also customary for candidates to stage collections at every meeting they address. However, often collections from the public are grossly exaggerated to accommodate the various "black-money" funds that the candidates and the parties generate. Most candidates use party workers and other volunteers to go from door to door to collect money.

<sup>8</sup> These funds may be legal or illegal in the sense that political parties often receive substantial cash donations from 'interested' supporters. Most of this money is unaccounted for, commonly referred to as 'black money'. Sometimes parties are known to collect this money illegally through hidden contributions, commissions on large governmental purchases, or permissions and licences for a restricted activity (as is suspected in the Bofors deal, or the deal with builders in Maharashtra by the Cong.I Chief Minister Antuley during early 80s). Antuley provided cement to selected builders at a 'black price'. In order to do so he restricted the public sale quota of cement from 10 million tons a quarter to only 21670 tons. This dramatically drove up cement prices and Antuley collected huge amounts for several trusts that he created in his personal capacity. See J A Naik, *The Opposition in India and the Future of Democracy* (New Delhi: S Chand, 1983). Political parties support their candidates with grants and publicity material for funding their election expenses.

Over one-half (53%) of Haryana MLAs said that one of the main sources was personal funds. Everybody (100%) said that there had to be collections from the public and from their 'friends'. 47% said that there were party funds made available to them, but each one added that this was extremely small and usually it was not cash but some help through party posters and flags etc. One-quarter (27%) said that they got donations from local businesses in their area. To view this issue from the perspective of the ruling or the opposition parties, 43% of the sample of ruling party MLAs and 62% of the MLAs from the opposition stated that personal resources were needed at the time of their campaign. It is clear that this phenomenon cuts across party lines and that there is no particular bias from the point of view of the ruling or the opposition party.

In Maharashtra 60% of the MLAs said that personal funds had to be used for their election campaign. Here again there was no bias detected on the basis of their party affiliations. 64% of the MLAs from the ruling party and 55% of the opposition said that they had to use personal funds. In case of collections from the public, 79% said that it was a major contribution. Once again a relatively smaller proportion of the MLAs (38%) said that their parties provided some funds but, in keeping with the response of Haryana MLAs, most of the help seemed to be in the form of party flags and posters etc. A small proportion (17%) said that they received some donations from local businesses in their, area but this group had 85% members from the ruling party. This is quite normal, as local businesses will normally support candidates who are expected to win. Most of the time this helps to get extra funds for the incumbent which in the case of Maharashtra was Cong.I.

In Tamilnadu, 63% said that they relied on contributions from the public and collections by their party workers. This response again cut across party lines - 77%

of the ruling party and 44% of the opposition MLAs. Regarding the need to generate personal funds, 66% of the total sample said that they had to spend personal funds for their election campaign. Here again we find the same response across party lines, the ruling party at 68% and the opposition at 62%. There was a relatively stronger response to the question of party funds being made available and 63% of the MLAs, across party lines, replied in the affirmative. Donations from local businesses (24%) were also a significant source of the funds that the MLAs received. This response weighed in favour of the ruling DMK.

In West Bengal the pattern of response was different and a complete contrast to other states. Although 89% responded that funds were collected from the public, the common response from the CPI(M) MLAs was that their party workers went out to collect and that only small contributions were accepted. This information appeared to be correct upon verification by the author in the Burdwan area. So far as the question of personal funds was concerned, only 20% of the West Bengal MLAs, a group that included only 3% from the ranks of the ruling Left-front, responded in the affirmative. This is in striking contrast to all our other states and to the opposition in West Bengal, from among whose ranks 89% said that they had to use personal funds. The overall 20% response is thus made up almost exclusively from the ranks of the opposition. Overall, almost all MLAs (98%) responded that they primarily used party funds. The question of donations from local businesses for individual campaigns was almost non-existent.

In Uttar Pradesh, 90% said that they relied on contributions and collections by the party workers. The ruling party MLAs (in this case BJP) said that the collections were made mostly by the party workers and that it constituted a major part of their overall resources. There was a similar response from the opposition; 93% of the

ruling party and 88% of the opposition MLAs said that this was the case. On the question of using personal resources, 69% of the sample said that personal funds had to be used. Again, this response cut across party lines with 65% of the ruling party and 71% of the opposition. Surprisingly for a BJP state (because BJP support is often identified with the trading and business community) the response to receiving donations from local businesses was a token 3%. However, a fairly large response (70%), across party lines, stated that they received party funds. The theme, however, unlike with the leftist parties, was that this was small help from the party in the form of posters or flags and sometimes small cash amounts. The only MLAs who were given a somewhat larger support, were generally the Scheduled Caste candidates who often came from poorer areas as well as from poorer families. This becomes necessary as each party has to woo good Scheduled Caste candidates for contesting through the reserved constituencies.<sup>9</sup>

Taking all states into account, it is clear that except for the leftist parties, all candidates must generate personal resources if they hope to contest an election. Knowing informally the amount that it costs for the state assembly elections, it is also clear that candidates have to generate substantial resources on their own without which they believe that they do not have any chance of getting elected.

### **Sources of Finance for Election Campaign (Party-wise)**

In line with our analysis on a state-wise basis, we present these data on a party-wise scale in table IX.2 below:

---

<sup>9</sup> Under the constitution of India, these are constituencies exclusively reserved for candidates who belong to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes.

**Table IX.2**  
**MLAs describe the following as their**  
**Sources of Finance for their Election Campaign**  
**(Party-wise)**

| STATE        | Contributions from public |            | Personal Funds |            | Party Funds |            | Business Donations |            |
|--------------|---------------------------|------------|----------------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
|              | No.                       | %          | No.            | %          | No.         | %          | No.                | %          |
| Cong.I       | 36                        | 69%        | 40             | 77%        | 35          | 67%        | 12                 | 23%        |
| CPI(M)       | 29                        | 88%        | 0              | 0%         | 32          | 97%        | 0                  | 0%         |
| BJP          | 34                        | 87%        | 25             | 64%        | 27          | 69%        | 2                  | 5%         |
| DMK          | 14                        | 74%        | 13             | 68%        | 12          | 63%        | 6                  | 32%        |
| Janata Dal   | 34                        | 92%        | 23             | 62%        | 20          | 54%        | 3                  | 8%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>147</b>                | <b>82%</b> | <b>101</b>     | <b>56%</b> | <b>126</b>  | <b>70%</b> | <b>21</b>          | <b>12%</b> |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response

More than three-quarters (77%) of the Cong.I MLAs said that one of the sources was personal funds. The second largest proportion (69%) stated that there were collections from the public and from their 'friends'. A further two-thirds said that party funds were made available to them, but each one added that this was extremely small and generally it was not cash but some help through party posters and party flags etc. 23% said that they got donations from local businesses in their area.

From CPI(M) a massive 97% stated that they used party funds, and not even a single legislator said that he had to use any personal funds. CPI(M) is unique in this regard. In addition the funds available are modest and CPI(M) candidates are not expected to compete with other parties in spending money at election time. 88% of the MLAs also pointed out that their party workers go out and get contributions from the public and local communities. No other source of funds was mentioned.

From BJP, an overwhelming proportion (87%) stated that they relied on public contributions but equally a large two-thirds also said that they had to use personal funds. Contributions from the party were small, but 69% said that they got some help.

The same pattern as BJP was followed in DMK. While the largest proportion (74%) stated that they relied on public contributions, a fairly large proportion of 68% also stated that they had to use personal funds. DMK also led all other parties (32%) in responding that they were supported by local businesses. This provides a link to our earlier remarks that at local levels people were not able to easily vote against DMK because of possibility of reprisals (see Chapter IV).

Among Janata Dal MLAs the highest proportion (92%) from among all our parties stated that they obtained public contributions. Nonetheless, 62% said that they had to use personal funds in order to contest elections. This large proportion is the lowest reported from among the four political parties once we eliminate CPI(M) which had 'nil' response under the personal finance category.

Overall, we found that except for CPI(M) all other parties expect their candidates to spend money from personal sources in order to contest elections. Herein lies at least a part of the foundation of the corrupt political culture that proliferates in India today. The money spent on elections has to be recovered. "Personal funds" most certainly do not mean personal savings. These are generated from undeclared local sources who expect and demand favours if the candidate is elected. A politician is, therefore, compromised even before he is elected.



## MLAS' TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

Regarding the question on how well travelled the MLAs are, we classified their response into three categories; those who had travelled to most parts of India (Well travelled), those who had travelled in their own region or in a limited way (Partly travelled), and those who had not travelled out of their state (Not travelled). The response is presented in table IX.3 below:

**Table IX.3**  
**MLAs' Travel Experience in India**

| STATE         | Well Travelled |            | Partly Travelled |            | Not Travelled |           |
|---------------|----------------|------------|------------------|------------|---------------|-----------|
|               | No.            | %          | No.              | %          | No.           | %         |
| Haryana       | 11             | 73%        | 3                | 20%        | 1             | 7%        |
| Maharashtra   | 22             | 52%        | 14               | 33%        | 6             | 14%       |
| Tamilnadu     | 20             | 53%        | 15               | 39%        | 3             | 8%        |
| West Bengal   | 22             | 49%        | 19               | 42%        | 4             | 9%        |
| Uttar Pradesh | 31             | 46%        | 33               | 49%        | 3             | 4%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>106</b>     | <b>51%</b> | <b>84</b>        | <b>41%</b> | <b>17</b>     | <b>8%</b> |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

We found that Haryana MLAs were the most well travelled legislators from the five states in our study. Almost three-quarters had visited most Indian states. However, Haryana, as a relatively small state, had a small sample. All the other four states were around the half-way mark, Maharashtra at 52%, Tamilnadu at 53%, West Bengal at 49%, and Uttar Pradesh at 46%. In addition, 41% had partly travelled (i.e., to a few states). The highest proportion who had scarcely travelled was in the state of Maharashtra at 14%.

## MLAs' travel experience (Party-wise)

The party-wise response is presented in table IX.4 below:

**Table IX.4**  
**MLAs' travel experience in India?**  
**(Party-wise)**

| PARTY      | Well Travelled |     | Partly Travelled |     | Not Travelled |     |
|------------|----------------|-----|------------------|-----|---------------|-----|
|            | No.            | %   | No.              | %   | No.           | %   |
| Cong.I     | 30             | 58% | 18               | 35% | 4             | 8%  |
| CPI(M)     | 15             | 45% | 11               | 33% | 7             | 21% |
| BJP        | 19             | 49% | 12               | 31% | 8             | 21% |
| DMK        | 7              | 37% | 11               | 58% | 1             | 5%  |
| Janata Dal | 20             | 54% | 16               | 43% | 1             | 3%  |
| TOTAL      | 91             | 51% | 68               | 38% | 21            | 12% |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

The highest proportion of MLAs (21 % each) who had not travelled outside of their state were from the BJP and CPI(M). In the case of BJP, these MLAs were all from Uttar Pradesh and were all legislators for the first time. Likewise, from the CPI(M), these MLAs were all from West Bengal and had become legislators for the first time. There was no other significant variation to report, except that most of this travel had been as part of legislative teams officially visiting other states. This is probably the reason why the new MLAs are the least travelled.

## NATURE OF MEDIA READ BY MLAS

The response to the question about print media read by the MLAs, was classified into four categories, national (these are both English and Hindi), both national and regional, regional only, and local. The data are presented in table IX.5 below:

**Table IX.5**  
**Nature of Newspapers/Journals read by MLAs**

| TYPE                | Haryana |     | Maharashtra |     | Tamilnadu |     | West Bengal |     | Uttar Pradesh |     | Total |     |
|---------------------|---------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                     | No.     | %   | No.         | %   | No.       | %   | No.         | %   | No.           | %   | No.   | %   |
| National            | 5       | 33% | 2           | 5%  | 3         | 8%  | 3           | 7%  | 5             | 7%  | 18    | 9%  |
| National & Regional | 7       | 47% | 15          | 36% | 18        | 47% | 31          | 69% | 33            | 49% | 104   | 50% |
| Regional only       | 2       | 13% | 18          | 43% | 11        | 29% | 5           | 11% | 21            | 31% | 57    | 28% |
| Local               | 0       | 0%  | 6           | 14% | 6         | 16% | 6           | 13% | 5             | 7%  | 23    | 11% |
| None                | 1       | 7%  | 1           | 2%  | 0         | 0%  | 0           | 0%  | 3             | 4%  | 5     | 2%  |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

Most MLAs in each state read both national and regional newspapers. Overall this proportion came to half of the total sample. MLAs in West Bengal topped this group with 69%. The others were in a range of 47% to 49% with the exception of Maharashtra where 36% were in this category. Combining this with the proportion who mainly read national media, 59% of MLAs were covered. The maximum proportion who read national media was from Haryana (33%). For regional media, the maximum were from Maharashtra (43%).

Overall, the legislators who read either regional or local media were a significant 39%, but considerably less than those who read national or national & regional media (59%). This goes some way towards our understanding that the state level legislators have a wider perspective and they are likely to be ‘bilingual’ since the national print media, both English and Hindi, largely expresses itself in the ‘modern’ idiom. The MLAs are most certainly not “rustic”.

## Nature of Media Read by MLAs (Party-wise)

The party-wise response is presented in table IX.6 below:

**Table IX.6**  
**Nature of Newspapers/Journals read by MLAs**  
**(Party-wise)**

| TYPE                | Cong.I |     | CPI(M) |     | BJP |     | DMK |     | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|---------------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                     | No.    | %   | No.    | %   | No. | %   | No. | %   | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| National            | 3      | 6%  | 3      | 9%  | 5   | 13% | 0   | 0%  | 6          | 16% | 17    | 9%  |
| National & Regional | 32     | 62% | 18     | 55% | 14  | 36% | 9   | 47% | 15         | 41% | 88    | 49% |
| Regional Only       | 12     | 23% | 6      | 18% | 13  | 33% | 6   | 32% | 15         | 41% | 52    | 29% |
| Local               | 5      | 10% | 6      | 18% | 5   | 13% | 4   | 21% | 1          | 3%  | 21    | 12% |
| None                | 0      | 0%  | 0      | 0%  | 2   | 5%  | 0   | 0%  | 0          | 0%  | 2     | 1%  |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

In every party a majority said that they read both National and Regional newspapers. In BJP and Janata Dal, however, there was also a significant proportion who stated that they only read Regional media. Since both these parties were mainly present in the state of Uttar Pradesh, this probably represents a state culture rather than a party culture. Urban MLAs tended to read National media and it was either rural candidates or the least educated ones who limited themselves to Local media only.

Interestingly we found that there was a correlation between an MLAs' travels and the media read. With reference to table IX.6, if we ignore those legislators who had not travelled, we note the following:

1. Of the legislators who had partly travelled, only a quarter read national or both national and regional media. Among those who were well travelled this proportion was 83%.
2. Of those who were partly travelled, 43% read only regional media. Among the well travelled this proportion was much lower at 13%.

3. Of those who had partly travelled 32% read only local media. Among the well travelled this proportion was only 4%.

It appeared obvious that the less an MLA had travelled, the more he was immersed in local affairs and the less interest he had for affairs outside of his local boundaries.

## **X. PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE IN STATE ASSEMBLIES**

In Chapter VI, we have discussed the views of MLAs on the working of legislative committees in their respective assemblies through their perception of the effectiveness of their own role in them. In none of the states did we get a clear majority of MLAs who believed that their work in the legislative committees was effective. Nonetheless, the response was varied: in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh less than one-fifth of MLAs felt that the work of legislative committees yielded good results; in Maharashtra and Tamilnadu, on the other hand, this response came from over twice the proportion of the former two states. We have attempted to test this response by studying the work of one of the most important of these, the Public Accounts Committees (PACs) in our five legislatures.

In this chapter, first we provide a brief background on legislative committees in general: why committees are important to legislatures, how these are classified in legislative literature, and what functions they perform in principle. We also relate this information to committees in the British House of Commons, as the Indian Parliament has based itself on the British model. Second, we review the classification of committees in the Indian Lok Sabha, and then focus specifically on the PACs in our five legislatures. As we discuss below, we chose this particular committee for a detailed analysis because it is one of the most important committees in state assemblies for retrospectively overseeing the administration. Furthermore, this is one of the common committees with common scope of activity in all state legislatures which provides a good basis for comparison.

## COMMITTEES IN LEGISLATURES

An important way in which legislatures have sought to become more effective is by creating committees. The British House of Commons library research division, in a recent background paper on select committees, comments,<sup>1</sup>

The genesis of the present system of select committees lay in the growing realisation, apparent since the mid-nineteenth century, that the combination of the rapid expansion of the state and the development of the party system had caused parliament to lose much of its ability to control the executive.

Obviously, committees concerned with any policy area are able to study it in more detail and more expertly than the whole House. In this sense, committees provide the legislature with the specialization necessary to do its job more effectively. For this reason, committees are sometimes called the ‘workhorses’ of legislatures as “they enable legislatures to achieve far greater scrutiny of an issue or a bill than it would be physically possible at the plenary level”.<sup>2</sup> Some scholars have referred to them as ‘little legislatures’ because they become the “eye, the ear, the hand, and very often the brain” of legislatures.<sup>3</sup>

However important committees appear in principle, they have in practice achieved significantly varying degrees of importance in different legislatures. The prime, and perhaps sole, example of really influential legislative committees is the United States where, both at the Congress level and at the level of the state legislatures, committees have not only gained in importance over the years, but the process of legislation would be impossible without them. Wayne L Francis and J Riddlesperger illustrate the enormous work-load of legislation by the number of proposals introduced each

---

<sup>1</sup> Home Affairs Section, Background paper no.298, *Select Committees*, 7 September 1992.

<sup>2</sup> John D Lees and Malcolm Shaw (Eds.), *Committees in Legislatures: A Comparative Analysis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979) p.419-420

<sup>3</sup> Roger Davidson and Walter J Oleszek, *Congress and its Members* (Washington, DC: Congressional Press, 1981)

session year - 2,000 in a typical state and 20,000 in New York (Council of State Governments, 1980). They argue that without an efficient committee system there would be no way to effectively process such a large volume of legislation.<sup>4</sup> In fact, Wayne and Riddlesperger conclude (after sending a questionnaire to about 5000 legislators, and getting a response from 2028, from 99 chambers of the 50 states) that the committee systems in state legislatures have become the principal centres of decision making. They also discovered that committee decisions tended to be less partisan than party caucus decisions.<sup>5</sup> Even if this is overstated, there is no denying the significant role that committees play in the US Congress and US state legislatures.

### **Classification of Committees**

It is difficult to provide a general classification for legislative committees because they can differ in scope, power and effectiveness in different legislatures. In the United States, the home ground of legislative committees, at least four major types of committees are identified - *standing committees*, *select* or *special committees*, *joint committees* and *conference committees*. In addition, there are *sub-committees* within existing committees and formal or informal *party committees*.

*Standing Committees* are independent units, their jurisdiction fixed by the rules of the House. Their leadership is determined by a seniority system and their membership is also fixed and not rotational or fluid in any other way. They continue from Congress to Congress except if they are eliminated. However, in other legislatures membership of standing committees may not be permanent in the same way. In India, the standing

---

<sup>4</sup> Wayne L Francis and James W Riddlesperger, 'U.S.State Legislative Committees: Structure, Procedural Efficiency, and Party Control' in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* Vol. VII, No. 4, November 1982, pp. 453-471

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*



committees, such as the Public Accounts committee, are appointed from year to year.<sup>6</sup>

*Select* or *Special Committees* are established by Congress essentially to conduct investigations into specific problems. They do not have any decision-making powers but they may make recommendations or simply report their findings to the Congress.

*Joint Committees* are committees of both Houses and have traditionally served as a means of achieving coordination in a bi-cameral legislature.

*Conference Committees* are used to negotiate compromise if a bill or resolution does not pass both the Houses in identical form. Their membership is also from both Houses.<sup>7</sup>

### **Purposes of Committees**

Committees in legislatures may be formed for several purposes, some of which could be specific to certain legislatures. But generally, the main purposes of committees in legislatures may be categorised as follows:<sup>8</sup>

*The Legislative purpose* - this is the most common and most obvious purpose for which committees are created. In some countries, all bills are referred to committees (as in the USA), in other countries, only some bills may be referred (as in India).<sup>9</sup>

*The Financial purpose* - in this case the committees are concerned with both raising and spending revenue and the accounting for it by the executive and the administration. These are generally important committees and they rank high in

---

<sup>6</sup> *Parliamentary Committees* (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1988) p. 5

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed discussion on types of committees in legislatures, see David M Olson, *The Legislative Process: A Comparative Approach* (New York: Harpers & Row, 1980) pp. 278-280

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed description, see Malcolm Shaw, 'Conclusion' in John D Lees and Shaw (Eds.), *Committees in Legislatures...*, op. cit., pp. 370-377

<sup>9</sup> See Subhash C Kashyap, 'Committees in the Indian Lok Sabha' in John D Lees and Malcolm Shaw (Eds.), *Committees in Legislatures: A Comparative Analysis*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979)

prestige and power in most legislatures. In the Indian parliament, the Lok Sabha, for example, the three main financial committees - the Public Accounts Committee, the Estimates Committee, and the Committee on Public Undertakings are by far the most important and enjoy special prestige.<sup>10</sup>

*The Investigative purpose* - sometimes special committees are appointed to investigate some specific issue and report to the House. Obviously, these are committees created for a limited time and specific purpose. In Canada, for example, during 1969-70 almost half the meetings of legislative committees were for investigative purposes.<sup>11</sup> Outside of the US, the Italian parliament appears to have the most formally effective investigative committees, as these are “expressly authorised to exercise power equal to those exercised by courts of law.”<sup>12</sup>

*Administrative oversight as a purpose* - committees are sometimes exclusively assigned the task of oversight as in the case of the Government Operations committee in the US House of Representatives. At other times committees formed for another purpose may also play this role, as in the case of the Public Accounts Committee in the Lok Sabha who produce what are known as ‘Actions Taken Reports’ (ATRs) to oversee whether their recommendations were implemented by the administration.

*Housekeeping as a purpose* - examples of committees for this purpose are committees on rules and procedures, privileges, petitions and electoral returns. The American congress, for example, has a Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

While committees have evolved to become an integral part of legislative activity in the democratic world, their importance varies between different legislatures.

---

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308

<sup>11</sup> Michael Rush, ‘Committees in the Canadian House of Commons’ in John D Lees and Malcolm Shaw (Eds.), *Committees in Legislatures* op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Malcolm Shaw, ‘Conclusion’ in John D Lees and Malcolm Shaw (Eds.), *Committees in Legislatures: A Comparative Analysis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979) p. 373

Sometimes parties and committees are seen as alternative ways of organizing a legislature, and the importance of each is argued to be inversely proportional to the other.<sup>13</sup> For example, in the British House of Commons the party is very important and one of the consequences is that committees tend to be weak for they are perceived to be compromising “the basic adversarial party-based role of the Commons”.<sup>14</sup> This situation is reversed in the American Congress, where strong committees and relatively weaker, less cohesive, parties prevail. As political systems in the democratic world are broadly divided along these two models, the importance of committees also follows the same pattern.

In general, we find that legislative committees tend to be stronger in ‘transformative’ legislatures and weak in the ‘arena’ type legislatures.<sup>15</sup> The US Congress, which is a prime example of a transformative legislature, has a strong committee and sub-committee system. The reliance of Congress on committees is striking, and no matter where the bills originate they are always subject to committee review. In fact, scholars have argued that the committee structure of Congress is the chief source of strength in the Congressional system.<sup>16</sup> Certainly the number and importance of committees and sub-committees in the US Congress far exceeds any other in the world.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> David M Olson, *The Legislative Process: A Comparative Approach* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980)

<sup>14</sup> Background paper number 298, op., cit., emphasises that Whips don’t like committees and that the committees ignore “the basic adversarial, party-based role of the Commons” p. 59

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion on types of legislatures, see Chapter II

<sup>16</sup> Roger Davidson and Walter J Oleszek, *Congress and its Members* (Washington, DC: Congressional Press, 1981)

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

In Britain, on the other hand, the House of Commons - a prime example of an arena type legislature - does not have a particularly strong committee system, and until 1979 both the executive and the House had demonstrated a marked reluctance to increase the number of committees.<sup>18</sup> The 1959 Procedures Committee, when examining arguments for creating a specialist committee on the colonies, commented,<sup>19</sup>

Notwithstanding that the order of reference might be drawn in general terms without conferring any express powers of direct interference, there is little doubt that the activities of such a committee would ultimately be aimed at controlling rather than criticizing the policy and actions of the department concerned. In so doing it would be usurping a function which the House itself has never attempted to exercise.

However, after the reforms of 1979 twelve departmental select committees were created and the number has since risen to sixteen. Their effectiveness is still a point of debate. For example, the 1990 Procedures Committee, after investigating the results of the 1979 reforms, felt that "the system as a whole has proved itself a valuable and cost-effective addition to the House's ability to perform its proper function of holding Ministers to account"<sup>20</sup> Many disagree. Neville Johnson, in evaluating the role of Commons Select Committees, points out:<sup>21</sup>

The attention paid by the House to select committee reports remains cursory and there is little that committees can do if ministers and departments decline to listen to them...we must recognize that they (committees) are defined by the House itself...as institutions which are expected to stay on the sidelines.

Gavin Drewry echoes the same sentiments in arguing that the reforms of 1979 were largely cosmetic and that committees have remained marginal to the process of

---

<sup>18</sup> See Geoffrey Smith, 'Parliamentary Change in Britain' in Norman J Ornstein (Ed.), *The Role of the Legislature in Western Democracies* (Washington, DC: AEI, 1981)

<sup>19</sup> House of Commons Library Research Division, Background paper no. 298, *op. cit.*, p.2

<sup>20</sup> Cited in House of Commons, Background paper no. 298, *op. cit.*, p. 59

<sup>21</sup> Neville Johnson, 'An Academic's View' in Dermot Englefield (Ed.), *Commons Select Committees: Catalysts for Progress?* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1984) p. 64

decision-making in the Parliament.<sup>22</sup> This comment may be supplemented by the fact that only nineteen reports, out of about 200 submitted, were debated in the House between 1979/80 and 1982/83.<sup>23</sup>

Nonetheless, there is a general consensus in the literature that committees tend to increase accountability of the executive. The prospect that *some* committee reports *may* be debated at least provides that the government departments tend to take committees seriously.

### COMMITTEES IN INDIA

The Indian Parliament has based itself largely on the British model. The origin of Parliamentary committees in India dates back to the Constitutional Reforms of 1919 in British India, but their number, functions and scope were considerably enlarged after independence. Committees in the Indian Parliament are broadly categorised into - *Standing Committees* and *Adhoc Committees*.<sup>24</sup> The standing committees here are not to be confused with the standing committees in the American Congress. These are permanent committees but their membership is not determined in the same fashion as in the US Congress.

The members of the main standing committees such as the Public Accounts Committee, the Estimates Committee, and, the Committee on Public Undertakings

---

<sup>22</sup> Gavin Drewry, 'The Committees since 1983' in Gavin Drewry (Ed.), *The New Select Committees: A Study of 1979 Reforms* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) pp. 397-427

<sup>23</sup> Geoffrey Lock, 'Resources and Operations of Select Committees: A Survey of Statistics' in Gavin Drewry (Ed.), *The New Select Committees: A Study of 1979 Reforms*, op.cit. p. 343

<sup>24</sup> *Parliamentary Committees* (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1988)

are *elected* every year by the House.<sup>25</sup> Members for the other standing committees are *appointed* each year by the Speaker of Lok Sabha after due consultation with the leaders of both the ruling party and opposition. Representation is generally provided in proportion to the parties' strength in the House. The Chairmen of the committees in the Lok Sabha are appointed by the Speaker from among the members of the committee. Next to a ministerial position, these appointments are politically important which leads to a great deal of bargaining if the opposition has good strength in the House.<sup>26</sup>

*Adhoc Committees* are committees which are constituted from time to time to enquire into and report on a specific issue or those select or joint committees on bills which are appointed to scrutinise and report on specific bills. These are temporary committees and their term and scope is specifically limited to the issue at hand.

In line with their counterparts in Britain, Indian committees have no decision-making role. They can only make non-binding recommendations which the executive may or may not accept.

### **Public Accounts Committee in State Legislatures**

As committees in state assemblies are based on the pattern followed in the Lok Sabha, the Public Accounts Committee is one of the main standing committees in state legislatures. The membership is similarly determined on a yearly basis and the convention, as in the Lok Sabha and the British House of Commons, is to appoint its

---

<sup>25</sup> One exception is the Committee on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Tribes which has a two-year term.

<sup>26</sup> See Subash C Kashyap, 'Committees in the Indian Lok Sabha' in Lees and Shaw (Eds.) *Committees in Legislatures...*, op. cit.

chairman from the opposition benches, the only committee to have such an arrangement. This practice started in 1967, when the Congress party lost its dominance in the parliament, and has continued since. Formally speaking, this organisational arrangement is assumed to eliminate any partisan treatment in investigating the government. Interestingly, with the delays in investigating issues and the turnover of state governments, the opposition is sometimes investigating its own past conduct in government.

Over a period of time, each state legislature has collected an assortment of committees, and the work of these committees has become an integral part of the function of the assembly. From among our sample of MLAs from the five states included in our study, a large 80% percent had been a member of one committee or another. We therefore investigated whether, in the perception of MLAs, the work of these legislative committees was positively useful (Chapter VI). In order to evaluate their response against actual performance, we analysed the performance of Public Accounts Committees. There were two main reasons for choosing this particular committee for our study. First, that it is a committee which is generally held in highest esteem by legislators.<sup>27</sup> The second reason is that it is a committee with common terms of reference in all the legislatures, which makes for a proper basis of comparison.

The institution of the Public Accounts Committee was established in the early 1920s, when a Public Accounts Committee was introduced into the Central Legislative

---

<sup>27</sup> Dr. Subhash Kashyap has the following comments, "Members were asked about the relative importance of the various committees. The replies indicated that in the minds of members there is a definite hierarchy. The Public Accounts Committee, the Estimates Committee, and the Public Undertakings Committee occupied the first three places in that order", 'Committees in the Indian Lok-Sabha' in Lees and Shaw (Eds.), *Committees in Legislatures*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979) p. 320

Assembly under the Montague-Chelmsford reforms. Currently, the Public Accounts Committee is generally constituted during the first session of state assemblies in the new year, or during the first session of a newly constituted assembly. The speaker appoints the chairman from among the members of the committee guided by the advice of the leader of the main opposition party. Originally the Public Accounts Committees of various state legislatures were assigned a threefold function:<sup>28</sup>

- a) *that the moneys shown in the accounts as having been disbursed were legally available for and applicable to the service or purpose to which they have been applied or charged;*
- b) *that the expenditure conforms to the authority which governs it, and*
- c) *that every reappropriation has been made in accordance with such rules as have been prescribed by the competent authority.*

Over a period of time, however, several additions have been made to these basic functions. Currently, Public Accounts Committees in state legislatures are not only supposed to be the main watchdog keeping an eye on incomes and expenditures of the state government, they are also expected to make recommendations for action to be taken based on their scrutiny of the financial information relating to state affairs. In other words, PACs are not only entrusted with the job of investigating irregularities but they must also recommend “policy” actions. Further, they are required to prepare an “Action Taken Report” (ATR) recording actions taken, or proposed to be taken on the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee relating to the previous year. As their base of information, the Public Accounts Committees take the report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General (C&AG) pertaining to the annual accounts of the entire state as well as individual state government departments and corporations where these do not fall within the purview of the Committee on Public Undertakings.

---

<sup>28</sup> Rules of Procedure of the Public Accounts Committee (internal working), Maharashtra Legislature Secretariat, Appendix II (Reproduced in Appendix 2)



(For detailed information, the rules of procedure governing the working of the Public Accounts Committee in Maharashtra Legislative Assembly are reproduced in Appendix 2).

The first observation on the work of the Public Accounts Committee in the five legislatures included in our study is that the committee is discussing issues which are considerably old, and to that extent the deliberations of the committee may be irrelevant to inculcating financial discipline in various departments of the government. The example of how stale the issues can be when these are discussed in the Public Accounts Committee is seen in the following table X.1 relating to the West Bengal Legislative Assembly. It shows the year of discussing an issue together with the date of the Comptroller & Auditor-General's report which brought up the issue.

**Table X.1**  
**Reports of West Bengal Public Accounts Committees**

| Report                                   | Date presented to Assembly | Reference C&AG's report for year | No. of Years between |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1987-88</b> |                            |                                  |                      |
| First to Fourth Report                   | 26 Oct.1987                | 1978-79 to 1980-81               | 6 to 8               |
| Fifth Report                             | 20 Apr.1988                | 1981-82 to 1983-84               | 4 to 6               |
| Sixth to Eighth Report                   | 20 Apr.1988                | 1978-79 to 1980-81               | 7 to 9               |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1988-89</b> |                            |                                  |                      |
| Twelfth Report                           | 3 Apr.1989                 | 1981-82 to 1983-84               | 5 to 7               |
| Thirteenth Report                        | 3 Apr.1989                 | 1978-79 to 1980-81               | 8 to 10              |
| Fourteenth to Sixteenth Report           | 3 Apr.1989                 | 1981-82 to 1983-84               | 5 to 7               |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1989-90</b> |                            |                                  |                      |
| Eighteenth to Nineteenth Report          | 18 Apr.1990                | 1981-82 to 1983-84               | 6 to 8               |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1990-91</b> |                            |                                  |                      |
| Twentieth Report                         | 26 Mar.1991                | 1981-82 to 1986-87               | 4 to 9               |

We observe that the West Bengal Public Accounts Committee has discussed the reports of the C&AG after a delay of a minimum of four years and a maximum of 10 years. The reader can work out the relevance of a subject when it is being

discussed after this lapse of time. The same information for the states of Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh is given in annexure X.A.1 to this chapter. It illustrates that the minimum time lapse between the year of the C&AG's report and the year in which the Public Accounts Committee submits its report is normally in the same range, as in the case of West Bengal above.

These Public Accounts Committees are prime examples of poor institutions which not only serve very little purpose but, by being available as a legitimate forum for discussing financial irregularities, might actually help in legitimising the neglect with which inefficiency and deliberate misappropriation are treated. Natwarlal Shah, ex-speaker of Gujarat Assembly, points out his experience of how legislative committees have become useless. His view is that committees can not achieve much because of their faulty structure.<sup>29</sup> Subash Kashyap, in relation to the PAC in the Lok Sabha, remarks that the committee generally moves from department to department without any one department being examined on a continuing basis. He also quotes a senior civil servant who maintains that the committee leaves hardly "any mark on the administration".<sup>30</sup>

However, we must understand that the primary reason why Public Accounts Committees are not effective is because the executive does not take adequate interest in their work. If the executive treated the Public Accounts Committee as a tool to help highlight irregularities for focused action, then the effects of the poor organisation of the committee would be compensated by the active interest and follow-up of the executive. But the ground conditions are quite opposite, presumably

---

<sup>29</sup> *The Journal of Parliamentary Information*, Vol. XXXV, No.2 (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat)

<sup>30</sup> Subash C Kashyap, 'Committees in the Indian Lok Sabha' *op.cit.*, p. 311

because of the possibility that many irregularities take place for politically motivated reasons. In such cases, the system protects the concerned departments or officials.<sup>31</sup> In proportion to the number of irregularities pointed out in each PAC report, we found very few cases where some specific action had been taken against an official. This also leads to cynicism among legislators about legislative committees as discovered by I N Tewary in his interviews with 231 MLAs from Uttar Pradesh when 81% of his sample responded that they *did not* wish to be members of any committee.<sup>32</sup>

Apart from the basic issue of scant interest in the committees' work by the executive, the scope and organization of Public Accounts Committees are poorly designed. The purpose for which they are constituted is left vague, no responsibility is assigned to them, and consequently, no powers are given them except the ability to summon officials, but *not* government ministers, for enquiry. Therefore, if a minister is involved in any irregularity, the PACs can not even investigate the issue properly.

The sessions of PACs are held in private and their reports are not public documents. In Canada, for example, committees conduct their sessions in public. In the first place, it avoids undue give and take among members, and second, it avoids the appearance of secrecy.<sup>33</sup> It also provides for a media check on issues that come up for discussion, helping increase the effectiveness and accountability of committees.

The main problems with the organization of PACs are enumerated below:

---

<sup>31</sup> Many MLAs mentioned this during our interviews.

<sup>32</sup> I N Tewary, *State Politics in India: A Study of Legislative System in Uttar Pradesh* (Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1985) p. 102

<sup>33</sup> Graham White, *The Ontario Legislature: A Political Analysis*, op. cit., p. 180

- The committee is constituted on a yearly basis, which means that there is no sense of continuity. A new committee under a new chairman may not look at an issue with the same seriousness as did the earlier committee members.
- The committee has no expertise of its own and convention does not allow it to bring in professional advisors on any issue. It is a team of laymen questioning the department officials, who even when incompetent, know more about their subject.
- The sittings of the committee are private and not open to public or the press. This means that even the threat of unpleasant publicity is removed, which might bring pressure to bear on officials.
- The terms of reference of the committee are too broad with the result that focused action is impossible. Issues which involve only a few thousand rupees get the same treatment as issues where millions of rupees are involved.
- The committee can only talk directly to the departmental officials but not to the ministers, who cannot be summoned by the committee to give evidence. The person in charge, formally speaking, is the minister but he is kept out of the dialogue between his officials and the committee. In addition, the department, though it can be summoned by the committee, is not responsible to the committee in any way. Therefore, departments routinely ignore the directives of the committee.
- Even when the committee finds a clear case of administrative negligence or of deliberate misconduct, including suspected misappropriation of funds, it can not initiate any action. A standard recommendation, drafted by the committee secretariat ( and one does get tired of reading the same recommendation over and over), is all that it can do.
- The reports are routinely tabled in the assembly and do not form the basis of any debate in the House. The PAC is unable to force a debate even when any major issue, and the committee's recommendation on it, is disregarded year after year.

Kunja Mehdi, who in his study of the Assam Legislature notes optimistically that the PAC can be a deterrent against inefficiency, nonetheless adds that delays in implementation reduce the effectiveness of the committee to “a very great extent”.<sup>34</sup>

- The committee functions through a permanent secretariat of ‘paper-pushers’ who continue to draft voluminous reports, and have a reasonable hold over the committee agenda.
- The work of the committee is based on the C&AG’s audit report which has already pointed out all these irregularities. This C&AG report should be the basis of action by the executive. By handing the report to the Public Accounts Committee, the responsibility of the executive is also passed down. The committee, in this case, is actually providing a channel for keeping an issue hanging almost indefinitely, for once an issue is under so called investigation by the Public Accounts Committee, any other direct action gets diluted.
- The committee does not involve itself with finding solutions. Even in serious issues it is rare that any action can be taken against the employees involved, and to that extent the members of these committees do not feel that they contribute productively to setting things right.
- The number of members in this committee is too large for any meaningful deliberation.<sup>35</sup> This large number also suggests that the main motivation may be to ‘accommodate’ members rather than create an effective institution. In the Canadian House of Commons, the committees usually have only eleven members, less than one-half of Maharashtra or Uttar Pradesh’s PACs. Even in the Lok

---

<sup>34</sup> Kunja Mehdi, *State Politics in India: A study of Assam Legislative Assembly* (New Delhi: Omsons Publications, 1988) p. 157

<sup>35</sup> In West Bengal, for example, the Public Accounts Committee has 15 members, in Maharashtra 24, in Uttar Pradesh 26, and in Tamilnadu 20. Only Haryana has 10 members, but then its Assembly strength is only 90 and the numbers in any committee are guided by a maximum of ten percent proportion to the size of membership of the House.

Sabha the PAC has a strength of 22 (15 members from the Lok Sabha and 7 from the Rajya Sabha).<sup>36</sup>

The only function that the committee seems to serve is that it brings into a limited debate the irregularities which are pointed out by the Comptroller & Auditor General. On the other hand, however, these irregularities are already well documented by the C&AG and it should not be for another institution simply to repeat the function without having any power or authority for corrective and/or punitive action. Two major ways in which committees could be more influential are a) by exceptional quality of their work, and, b) by being able to generate political support for their recommendations. India's state-level Public Accounts Committees are designed to exclude both.

Appended to this chapter are a few sample cases from each legislature that should clarify the nature of the work of the Public Accounts Committee. These committees may well be a little better organised in some states compared to others, but in principle the comments above apply to all legislatures, for the organization and the scope of work is the same everywhere.

---

<sup>36</sup> *Parliamentary Committees*, (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1988) p. 5

## **ANNEXURE X.A.1 TO CHAPTER X**

In support of our argument in Chapter X, we provide, in this annexure, two sets of information for all the five states. First, as we know that PACs take up for discussion only those cases which are brought up by the C&AG in his annual report, we provide some representative data for each of our five states illustrating the usual time-lag between the C&AG's report and the relevant report of the respective PACs. The data clearly indicate that the state-level PACs usually discuss issues that are quite old, and therefore the committees' work appears to have limited relevance to the exercise of any financial supervision or to the imposition of any financial discipline on the administration.

Second, we reproduce a few representative cases from the PAC reports of each state. These are self-explanatory and therefore require minimal comment. Nonetheless, wherever necessary we have provided an explanation to clarify the nature of the irregularity.

A perusal of these case studies will show that very little benefit comes out of the deliberations of the respective PACs. Most recommendations appear banal, and in any case little or no action follows. The number of cases reproduced from our states are: Haryana 2, Maharashtra 3, Tamilnadu 3, West Bengal 4, and Uttar Pradesh 2. These quoted cases are fairly representative of the normal work of the PACs.

### **HARYANA PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

Table X.A.1 below provides information on the respective dates of C&AG's reports and the relevant reports of the Haryana PAC. A uniform time-lag of 5-6 years is observed between the two.

**Table X.A.1**  
**Reports of Haryana**  
**Public Accounts Committee**

| Report                                   | Date presented to Assembly | Reference C&AG's report for year | No. of Years between |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1983-84</b> |                            |                                  |                      |
| 21st PAC Report                          | 29 Mar.1984                | 1978-79                          | 5 to 6               |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1984-85</b> |                            |                                  |                      |
| 22nd PAC Report                          | 29 Mar.1985                | 1979-80                          | 5 to 6               |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1985-86</b> |                            |                                  |                      |
| 23rd PAC Report                          | 28 Feb.1986                | 1980-81                          | 5 to 6               |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1986-87</b> |                            |                                  |                      |
| 25th PAC Report                          | 6 Mar.1987                 | 1981-82                          | 5 to 6               |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1987-88</b> |                            |                                  |                      |
| 26th PAC Report                          | 29 Mar.1988                | 1982-83                          | 5 to 6               |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1988-89</b> |                            |                                  |                      |
| 28th PAC Report                          | 14 Mar.1989                | 1983-84                          | 5 to 6               |

In the Haryana assembly, generally just one report a year is presented and sometimes there is one additional small report just to regularise the excess expenditure over and above the budgetary grants.

### **Case studies from the reports of PAC in Haryana**

We furnish below the background for two cases as reported by the Haryana PAC, and then reproduce the comments and the recommendations (highlighted) of the committee. These are representative cases which help to provide us with a critical insight into the effectiveness of the Haryana PAC. A full review of these reports for many years only confirms a repetition of the type of cases quoted below:

#### **Case I**

The Public Accounts Committee 1987-88, commenting on the C&AG's report for the year 1983-84, discusses a scheme initiated by the Haryana government in 1980 for



providing rural houses to landless Scheduled Castes and other backward communities who had nowhere to live. Given below are the targets and achievements:

**Table X.A.2**  
**Data regarding Homes**  
**constructed and Allotted to Landless**  
**Scheduled Castes and other Backward Communities**

| Year    | Beneficiaries Registered | Target Home Construction | Actual Constructed | Houses Allotted | Houses Actually Occupied |
|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1980-81 | 653                      | 1500                     | Nil                | Nil             | Nil                      |
| 1981-82 | 534                      | 1500                     | 78                 | Nil             | Nil                      |
| 1982-83 | 3656                     | 1500                     | 1427               | 294             | 99                       |
| 1983-84 | 336                      | 1100                     | 865                | 988             | 197                      |

Source: Haryana Public Accounts Committee 1987-88, 27th Report.

The figures pertain to each year and are not cumulative.

The background here is that several allottees were reluctant to accept the houses because of sub-standard construction i.e., inferior material, poor workmanship, leakage of roofs, incomplete wood work etc. For example, two houses collapsed and cement roofing sheets blew off some others.

The expenditure incurred on this project was Rs.167.03 lakhs (16.70 million) by the State Housing Board and additionally Rs.118 lakhs (11.8 million) by the Haryana State Cooperative Housing Federation, making a total of Rs.285.03 lakhs (28.50 million). After investigation of this case, and testimony of concerned department officials, the committee reported:<sup>37</sup>

While examining this matter the committee has noted that the department failed to achieve the fixed target of the construction of houses and the design and construction of the houses was so poor that it wasted public money on a large scale. The department also admitted that at certain places the houses were far away from the village ABADI, the size of the houses was very small, the construction work of the houses was poor and several sites were on uneven and low lying area. The site of houses and cheap specifications were not liked by the beneficiaries. The house sites were allotted at government/panchayat land or land acquired for the purpose by the revenue department but before the

<sup>37</sup> Haryana PAC Report, 1987-88, p. 31

allotment of sites the senior officers of the revenue department viz., revenue officers, tehsildars concerned did not actually see the sites before allotment to the beneficiaries and the people were not coming to accept the houses.

**The committee observed that the revenue department played a major role in this regard and the officers concerned should have sorted out the whole position at initial stage. The committee further observed that when the housing department had anticipated such like possibility the officers of the department should have investigated before construction as to whether the houses were acceptable to the beneficiaries or not.**

This gives a fair indication of the work being done by the Haryana Public Accounts Committee. It is difficult to see what purpose this investigation has served, unless we are inclined to accept that it is innovative to recommend that all issues should have been properly investigated before construction. The committee neither helps in resolving any of the issues, nor takes any action, nor makes any recommendation that might help safeguard against similar happenings again.

## **Case II**

This is another case from the 1987-88 Public Accounts Committee report relating to C&AG's report for the year 1983-84. Here the issue was a plan to provide drinking-water to villages. The number of such villages without drinking-water was 4690 and the Central government assistance during 6th plan for this purpose was Rs.23 crores (230 million). Excerpts from the report are reproduced below:<sup>38</sup>

However, out of 4690 villages identified only 2572 were provided with safe drinking water by the end of 1983-84. Delay in completion of schemes also resulted in increase in cost due to price escalation. The committee further note that against the norm of 41-45 litres per head/day, under the scheme the water availability ranged from 15 to 39 litres.

**The committee, therefore, strongly recommend that while launching such socio-economic programmes government should be circumspective in**

---

<sup>38</sup> Haryana PAC Report 1987-88, pp. 10-13.

**ensuring that the intended benefits of such programmes percolate to the beneficiaries within the parameters of financial ceilings and constraints.**

(Whatever this means!)

### **MAHARASHTRA PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

Table X.A.3 below provides information regarding some representative data of Maharashtra Public Accounts Committee reports together with data from the relevant audit reports from C&AG. The usual time-lag is 5-7 years between the two.

**Table X.A.3**  
**Reports of Maharashtra**  
**Public Accounts Committee**

| <b>Report</b>                            | <b>Date presented to Assembly</b> | <b>Reference C&amp;AG's report for year</b> | <b>No. of Years between</b> |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1987-88</b> |                                   |                                             |                             |
| 15th PAC Report                          | April 1988                        | 1982-83                                     | 5 to 6                      |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1989-90</b> |                                   |                                             |                             |
| 22nd PAC Report                          | August 1989                       | 1983-84                                     | 5 to 6                      |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1989-90</b> |                                   |                                             |                             |
| 23rd PAC Report                          | January 1990                      | 1983-84                                     | 6 to 7                      |

### **Case studies from the reports of PAC Maharashtra**

As in the case of Haryana, we quote below three representative cases together with the relevant excerpts from the relevant PAC reports.

#### **Case I**

The following excerpts from the 1988-89 Public Accounts Committee's 21st Report illustrate how various departments disregard the demands of the PAC for clarifications on issues pointed out by the C&AG and how the same pattern is repeated year after year. (Translated from Marathi)

In 1987-88, the PAC decided to take up for scrutiny those matters which were pointed out by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India (C&AG) in his report for 1983-84 for analysing excess expenditure/savings. But due to non-availability of comments/clarification from all the departments the scrutiny could not be completed. The Secretary Revenue Dept. was called before the committee on 3/2/1988 in order to draw his attention to this matter. He gave an assurance to the Committee that he will liaise with the departments and obtain their comments and submit them to the PAC without delay. Thereafter the Committee started taking down the testimony of those departmental secretaries whose clarification were available. However, for want of clarification from the Departments, a situation was reached where the meeting of the PAC had to be cancelled. Therefore, on 12/2/1988, the Revenue Secretary was called and it was brought to his notice that even by that date twelve departments had not sent their comments and/or clarification. The Secretary placed before the PAC the situation as seen by him. Thereupon the PAC expressed its grave disapproval of the lackadaisical approach of the departments of the Government and stated that due to non-availability of the comments/clarification, the work schedule of the PAC was getting upset. The Revenue Secretary took note of the Committee's feeling and requested that the Committee proceed with the work on the basis of available reports and again assured that he will obtain the reports from the remaining departments. Because of non-availability of reports from all departments, the Committee could not complete its work (1987-88) with the result that the PAC could not submit to the assembly its recommendations for approval of additional demands. **Therefore, the PAC in its interim report made a comment that due to non-availability of reports in spite of expressing strong disapproval, there was no sign of improvement in the situation and therefore the PAC asked that the State Government should seriously take note and behave with more responsibility and take concrete steps to make available to the PAC all reports in time.**

1.2 The PAC of 1988-89 started examining the reports/clarification. Due to delay in submission of reports the PAC faced many difficulties. Some of the departments submitted their reports and/or clarifications to the Secretariat of the PAC one or two days before the dates fixed for the meeting of the PAC with the result that the members of the PAC were getting the reports just before the meeting of the PAC and the members had no time to study them and the PAC had to adjourn the work of hearing the testimony of the concerned departmental secretaries.

1.3 The meeting for Medical Education and Drugs was fixed for 18/10/1988. But the testimony of the Departmental Secretary, fixed for 17/1/89 and 31/1/89 was adjourned due to non-availability of reports. The report was received on 17/2/1989 and the meeting of the PAC fixed for 20/2/1989 had to be postponed as the members had not had enough time to study the report.

1.4 From the above analysis of delays (as shown in 1.2) it will be evident that departments have sent their reports in a piecemeal manner on different dates.

The result was that there were problems and difficulties in calling departmental secretaries for testimony.

In comparison to other departments, as far as the PAC is concerned, the Revenue Department has a special place of importance. Even Revenue Dept. sent its reports in three lots and that too after long delays which will become evident from the subsequent narration. (First lot dated 27/7/1988, Second lot 19/9/1988 and the third lot on 8/12/1988).

**1.5 The entire situation is not limited to 1983-84 audit but every year the gravity of the situation has engaged the attention of the PAC year after year and in spite of the PAC expressing its disapproval and after extensive discussions, the Revenue Dept. has made several suggestions to remedy matters. However, for obtaining timely reports or comments, no improvement in the situation is visible. In its reports for the years 1977-78, 1978-79, 1979-80, while scrutinising reports, the matters were discussed with the Revenue Secretary. It was considered that the Revenue Dept. should collect reports from all departments and then submit them to the PAC within time. But the Revenue Dept. expressed its inability to shoulder this responsibility. However, it was agreed in front of the PAC that Revenue Dept, as an equal department, will make efforts to follow up with concerned departments to get them to send their reports to the Secretariat of the PAC. The PAC, in its 8th Report (1981-82) in Paragraph 4.7, had made a recommendation that the responsibility of making available to the PAC reports from various departments should be given to a centralised department and specifically recommended that the Revenue Dept should shoulder this responsibility. The subsequent Action Taken Report in this regard reads:**

**“PAC’s recommendations noted. After the C&AG’s report for 1980-81 is submitted to the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, within 4 to 6 weeks, efforts will be made to submit clarifications”**

**But after checking when the departments have submitted their reports for years 1980-81, 1981-82 and 1982-83, it came to light that carelessness instead of declining is on the increase continuously.**

**This is a grave matter of highest concern and brings to light the inefficiency of the Government Departments. Therefore, through the Chief Secretary to the Government, Government attention is being drawn by this Committee to ensure that serious attention is to be paid and that in future no such situation should be allowed. Of this, the Committee gives notice.**

## Case II

This highlights a case where over 1000 metric tonnes of rice had to be discarded because of a lack of proper co-ordination between different government departments.

One department did not issue instructions for four years, and the other waited for these instructions instead of following up or effectively reminding the former. We quote below relevant excerpts from the 1987-88 Public Accounts Committee's 17th report, April, 1988. (Translated from Marathi)

During the period May 1977 to June 1978, 2,118 metric tonnes of rice was supplied to Collector of Amaravati District, although there was no request or requisition from that district. The rice was purchased (procured) in Bhandara and Chadrapur districts. Out of the 2,118 m.t., 1,414 m.t. was lying unsold in godowns as of July 1978. The administration decided to sell the rice at market price without constrain of quota or quantity. There were no buyers as superior quality rice was freely available in the market at comparative price. The rice stayed put in the Government godowns. In August 1978, the Collector asked the Government for instructions. For four years, i.e., until 1982, Government found no time to issue instructions or to tell the Collector that he (or the Divisional Commissioner) had the necessary powers to decided the matter. Out of 1,414 m.t. rice, 1,125 m.t. became unfit for human consumption due to long storage period. This was reported to the Government; sell it as cattle feed, Government instructed. At this stage a check revealed a shortage of 272 m.t.

**The PAC feels that had the Government conveyed their decision in time, 1,125 m.t. rice would not have gone down the drain. It appears that priority was given to the disposal of rice purchased from other States at a higher price. The Department's contention that there was no delay in the disposal of the rice is not acceptable to the PAC.**

**Rice (and other food grains) is supplied to District authorities without their need based requisitions or demands. The PAC has expressed its displeasure and calls upon the Government to take to task those officers who are responsible.**

This is a meaningless recommendation, and the question of shortage of as much as 272 metric tonnes is totally ignored by the committee.

### Case III

This is an interesting case. A particular contractor had already defaulted in the supply of raincoats for the police. He had received unauthorised payments without even having supplied the ordered items. This background was obviously ignored, and a further order was placed with the same contractor. This time he supplied poor quality.

Relevant excerpts from the 1990-91 Public Accounts Committee's report are reproduced below.<sup>39</sup> (Translated from Marathi):

#### Conclusion and recommendations:

1.9 From the evidence produced, it comes to light that 1100 white rain-coats were purchased at the rate of Rs. 90/- per piece, for the use by Traffic Police in March/April 1983. The goods were checked by Central Stores Purchase Organization but when the rain-coats were used by Traffic Police, it was found that 449 were of very poor quality. The contractor refused to exchange the goods on the grounds that they had been used throughout the rainy season. However, out of 1100, the contractor took back 651. The replacement pieces were found to be equally bad and therefore Police Commissioner's office declined to accept the replacement and requested the contractor to refund Rs. 0.61 lakhs being the price of the goods. The contractor did not refund the amount. In 1981, the same contractor was asked to supply 10,000 black rain coats. As per agreement 90% price was to be paid within 30 days of certification that the goods were as poor sample. However, in May 1981, 5000 rain-coats were delivered at the Police Commissioner office without going through the intermediary. The Chief Accountant in Controller of Purchase office made the payment without actually receiving delivery of the goods. Later on the company supplied 2,930 black rain-coats, out of which 152 were rejected and balance 2,778 were accepted. A sum of Rs. 1.44 lakhs being 90% of the total price of 'not supplied' 2,222 rain-coats could not be recovered from the company. Thus a sum of Rs. 2.11 lakhs, being the price of 651 white rain-coats and 2,222 'not supplied' rain-coats could not be recovered by the Police Department. However, from the record it seems that a sum of Rs. 14000/- (security deposit) and Rs. 1,02,429.60 being the price of ankle shoes supplied to the department was kept in suspense. The criminal proceedings instituted against the company for recovering the amount, went against the Government.

**The Government should file a suit for recovering of the money lost by it, at the earliest. This is the recommendation of this PAC.**

---

<sup>39</sup> Report of the 1990-91 PAC, First report, November 1990.

The committee did not think it important to comment or to recommend remedying the several procedural irregularities that the case threw up, such as the lack of proper inspection at the time of receipt of the raincoats, the payment without receipt of goods and the fact that a suspect supplier was patronised again.

### **TAMILNADU PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

Table X.A.4 below provides information regarding some representative data of Tamilnadu Public Accounts Committee reports together with data of the relevant audit reports from C&AG. The usual time-lag between the two is observed to be 5-8 years.

**Table X.A.4**  
**Reports of TamilNadu**  
**Public Accounts Committee**

| <b>Report</b>                            | <b>Date presented to Assembly</b> | <b>Pertaining to C&amp;AG's report for the following year</b> | <b>No. of Years between</b> |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1990-91</b> |                                   |                                                               |                             |
| FiftyfirstReport                         | 24 Jan.1991                       | 1984-85 to 1985-86                                            | 5 to 6                      |
| Fiftysecond Report                       | 24 Jan.1991                       | 1983-84 to 1985-86                                            | 5 to 7                      |
| Fiftythird Report                        | 24 Jan.1991                       | 1982-83 to 1984-85                                            | 6 to 8                      |
| Fiftyfour to Fityeighth Report           | 24 Jan.1991                       | 1982-83 to 1985-86                                            | 5 to 8                      |

This is fairly representative of the time taken for all reports.

### **Case studies from the reports of PAC Tamilnadu**

We reproduce below three representative cases from Tamilnadu PAC reports to illustrate the ineffective nature of the committee's work.



## Case I

This case pertained to the failure of various schemes promoted by the Tamilnadu government for the development of sericulture in the state. The budgeted cost of the programme was phenomenal, and over 86% was spent in the period under review. The resultant increase in production was only 20% of the targets. On this serious failure, the relevant excerpts from Tamilnadu 1990-91 Public Accounts Committee Report are reproduced below.<sup>40</sup> This report related to C&AG's report for the years 1982-83 to 1984-85 indicating that the subject was discussed after the customary delay of several years.

1.1. In order to reorganize the silk industry in the state with a view to expanding the area under Mulberry and increasing the production of raw silk besides increasing employment opportunities in rural areas, various schemes were proposed during 1977-78 to 1982-83 involving total outlay of Rs.8.66 crores (86.6 million) for the development of Sericulture. The programme was implemented at a cost of Rs.7.47 crores (74.7 million) during 1977-78 to 1982-83...

1.2. The committee observes that the increase in production of silk achieved was 1.37 lakhs (0.137 million) kilograms only as against the anticipated increase of 6.75 lakh kilograms (0.675 million) of silk at the end of the 6th plan period.

1.3. The committee was informed that the reasons for shortfall was that sizeable portion of the cocoons produced in the state continues to flow to Karnataka.

**1.4. The committee recommends that in respect of such schemes the government should constantly monitor the achievements of the scheme and analyse the reasons for the shortfall and take remedial action then and there.**

This hardly needs any further comment. The shortfall in targeted production was about 80%. It is difficult to see what purpose this enquiry has served either for the past or to rectify matters for the future.

---

<sup>40</sup> Tamilnadu PAC 1990-91 (53rd report) presented to Assembly on 24 Jan.1991.

## Case II

This related to the Forest Department's supplies of bamboo, eucalyptus varieties, debarked wattle trees and wattle bark to three wood-based industries at subsidised rates on the basis of agreements entered from year to year. The 1981 Tamilnadu Public Accounts Committee had recommended (February 1981 report) that government should lay down general principles and guidelines for the supply of these raw materials to industries at a subsidised rate so as not to give any scope for criticism or malpractice. Since no action was taken by the department concerned, this recommendation was reiterated in the report of the subsequent Public Accounts Committee in March 1982. But by 1991 (it was nine years before the PAC got down to discussing the issue again) this had still not been actioned, and the 1990-91 Public Accounts Committee had the following to say (page 1 of 56th report):

1.2 The committee takes a serious view about the fact that the department had failed to take action on its two earlier successive recommendations made as far back as 1981 and 1982. The committee is of the view that there cannot be any bonafide reason for not implementing its recommendations for such a prolonged period.

**The committee, therefore, recommends that the government at the highest level may enquire into the causes or reasons for non-implementation of the committees recommendations and take necessary action.**

What further comment can anyone provide!

## Case III

Continuing on the theme of sericulture, the following case examines the recommendations of the PAC on a serious shortfall in production targets of DFLs (Disease Free Layings). We provide relevant excerpts from the 1990-91 Public Accounts Committee's 53rd report (Page 2):

## 2. Shortfall in production of DFLs

2.1 There was a shortfall in production of DFLs (Disease Free Layings) ranging from 57% to 80% during 1977-78 to 1982-83 and the consequence loss of revenue was Rs.65.67 lakhs (6.56 million).

2.2 The department attributed the shortfall to severe drought conditions in the state and other factors like farmers switching over to other commercial crops and also to non-availability of infra-structure like land and buildings. It was also replied that the sericulturists continued to get layings from Karnataka. It was also replied that government have proposed to increase the production capacity through World Bank project being implemented in the state from 1989-90 to 1993-94. (They have shortfalls of 80% and they are investing to increase capacity!)<sup>41</sup>

**2.3 The committee recommends that the physical targets of production of DFLs in the state should be achieved by adopting measures to overcome adverse seasonal conditions as otherwise there would be no meaning in the expansion programme envisaged by government at huge costs.**

The committee does not even touch upon the fact that increase in capacity in the face of an 80% shortfall needs critical re-evaluation. It recommends the adoption of measures to overcome adverse seasonal conditions, but it does not state what some of these measures might be. And it *wisely* comments that otherwise the expansion programme has no meaning! This is yet another typical example of how inane can be the recommendations of the PAC.

## WEST BENGAL PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

In Table X.1 in Chapter X, we have already provided information regarding some representative data of West Bengal Public Accounts Committee reports, together with data from the relevant audit reports of C&AG. It is observed that the usual time-lag between the date of the C&AG's report and the relevant report of the PAC is 4 to 10 years.

---

<sup>41</sup> Comments in paranthesis are mine.

## Case studies from the reports of PAC West Bengal

We provide four cases from different PAC reports of the West Bengal assembly.

### Case I

This was in relation to loans and grants to selected private film producers. There were several defaulters, and out of Rs. 33.30 lakhs (3.33 Million) paid between 1974-75 and March 1983 very little was recovered. After holding its hearings and investigation, the comments of the PAC 1987-88 were as follows:<sup>42</sup>

The Committee noted with grave concern that the matter had been running unseemingly over a long period. In its earlier report presented to the assembly on Sept. 23, 1981, the committee laid a strong observation on the failure of the department to regulate recovery of the loans from the defaulting producers/distributors and recommended that they should take immediate steps for realisation of all arrears dues from concerned producers. It also recommended for initiating civil suits against the defaulters if warranted. Accordingly the committee was inclined to know what action had so far been taken by the department on the aforesaid recommendation. It particularly desires to be enlightened as to the legal actions if any initiated against eight defaulting producers/distributors who had not still started repayment of loans.

While tendering evidence before the committee the department submitted that the position of the recovery of the loans remained unchanged. They, however, stated that legal proceedings were being contemplated for five cases against the concerned persons for recovery of the amounts due from them and these were being processed by the advocate. Accordingly to department these five cases were considered as test cases and seeing the ultimate results of those cases they expect to get a general guideline which might be applicable to other cases as they did not have any previous experience in the matter.

The committee could not be satisfied with the above reply as the department appeared to have taken no positive steps for the recovery of the government monies from the defaulting loanees. The committee viewed with distress that its earlier recommendation for initiating civil suits against the defaulters remained mostly unattended in as much as legal proceedings for only five cases had so far been contemplated and also these were still being under process.

---

<sup>42</sup> Report of the Public Accounts Committee 1987-88, West Bengal Legislature, relating to C&AG's report for the years 1981-82 to 1983-84.

The department admitted a delay in starting the process and submitted that the condition of film industry in West Bengal had been very poor over a long period. The government had to take various schemes to uplift the condition of the industry and these schemes had to be changed from year to year depending on the circumstances prevailing. While running the loan scheme it could not be anticipated that there would be a large number of defaulters. However, the scheme had been discontinued and cases were being initiated against the defaulters through the existing machinery. The department asserted that they were committed to recover the loans along with the interest accrued thereon from the concerned producers/distributors irrespective of whether their films were released or not. They would however have to wait till the completion of the films.

**The committee desires the department to lay due emphasis on the legal proceedings against all the defaulters so that they may not escape repayment of government dues under any legal loopholes.**

This report of the 1987-88 Public Accounts Committee was presented to the assembly on 10 May 1989. The facts of the case are quite clear. Loans were granted between 1974-75 and 1983. As late as 1988 very little had been recovered. The matter had already been raised by the Public Accounts Committee of 1979-80 and a clear recommendation had been made to initiate legal action. Now, eight years later, the situation had not changed one bit. No intervening Public Accounts Committee took up the issue. And now, finally, the committee was told that legal action was being *contemplated*. The committee's final reaction/recommendation does not take anyone to task, but simply repeats that the department should lay emphasis on legal proceedings. It is difficult to see really what purpose the committee serves. The notion that the bureaucracy would run scared under a possible threat of investigation by the committee is largely seen as a myth in cases of this kind, which are the general rule.

## Case II

This is a case of a loss of revenue to the tune of Rupees 9 million as a result of lack of coordination between two government departments. Relevant excerpts from the 1990-91 PAC report are reproduced below:

In this case C&AG pointed out a loss of Rs. 88.27 lakhs (8.82 million) for the years 1974-75 to 1986-87 as allottees of over 11000 holdings did not pay rates due to some technical problem. It was seen to be a lack of coordination between the department and the Municipality. The final comments of the committee were:

**The committee desires that the department should be more vigilant in this regard so that the problem based on local demand/agitation in respect of realisation of taxes may not remain unsettled for an indefinite period.**

What can we possibly make of this recommendation?

## Case III

This case pertains to the Rural Development Department of the government of West Bengal. The point under discussion is that although development programmes are carried out at enormous cost, there appears to be no monitoring or evaluation of the results achieved. The amount involved, unlike Rs. 8.82 million of the preceding case, is almost Rs. 300 million but the recommendation, as in the preceding case, is equally meaningless. The relevant excerpts from the 1989-90 Public Accounts Committee report are reproduced below:<sup>43</sup>

The audit para revealed that the impact of the programme implementation at a cost of Rs. 2962.55 lakhs (296.25 million) during 1980-81 to 1983-84 was never evaluated to assess the number of beneficiaries crossing the poverty line once for all. The department stated in July 1984 that at the DRDA (District Rural Development Authority) level and the state-level the monitoring unit

---

<sup>43</sup> Excerpts from the 1989-90 Public Accounts Committee report pertaining to the C&AG audit report for the years 1981-82 to 1983-84 on the Rural Development Department of the government of West Bengal.

could not be sufficiently strengthened for want of suitable manpower and the question of strengthening the unit at state-level was under consideration since May 1982 ( We are discussing this in 1989). They also stated in April 1985 that the universities of Calcutta and Kalyani as also the IIM (Indian Institute of Management) Calcutta had taken up evaluation and impact studies independently in four districts while the Directorate of Evaluation had taken up independent study in two other districts. In their latest reply the department conveyed that the evaluation reports of various evaluation studies conducted by different institutions were still awaited. (This is four years after having said that the evaluation studies were in process).<sup>44</sup> The committee's final response is given below:

**The committee desires that the department should immediately fix the recruitment policy under appropriate government orders and fill up the posts sanctioned so far, so that the state-level unit is adequately strengthened for taking up evaluation studies as also monitoring to ensure corrective measures for removal of constraints faced during implementation programme.**

Consider this response from the committee on a matter pending for nine years on a project cost of almost Rs. 300 million and pertaining to a department which will continue to incur huge development expenditure. This is not serious work by any stretch of the imagination.

#### **Case IV**

This was in relation to the collection of revenue on a particular project which was commenced because the initial anticipated collection was estimated to be Rs. 49 million. The project was called the Kangsabati project and the C&AG pointed out the following: against a total estimated revenue of Rs. 490 lakhs (49 million) for the period 1974-75 to 1978-79, only an amount of Rs.5 lakhs (0.5 million) was realised whereas the cost of collection thereof amounted to Rs. 34 lakhs (3.4 million). The latest position as ascertained by the audit was as follows:<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Comments in paranthesis are mine.

<sup>45</sup> Excerpts from from the Public Accounts Committee report 1987-88, p.3.

| Year    | Anticipated Revenue as per potential realised | Anticipated revenue as per test notes | Demand Raised | Revenue Realised | Costs of Collection |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1981-82 | 96.20                                         | 66.81                                 | 44.03         | 3.38             | 26.71               |
| 1982-83 | 69.95                                         | 16.77                                 | 14.67         | 5.46             | 27.21               |
| 1983-84 | 91.55                                         | 63.37                                 | 44.03         | 25.87            | 32.26               |
| 1984-85 | 104.90                                        | 74.36                                 | 36.43         | 3.49             | 33.90               |
| 1985-86 | n.a.                                          | n.a.                                  | 39.19         | 4.20             | 39.30               |

The matter received only vague comments from the Public Accounts Committee.

This was a project to raise revenue by Rs. 490 lakhs at the cost of Rs. 34 lakhs of which, however, the collection was only 5 lakhs. The scheme has continued and the latest position as indicated in the table above is that against a cost of collection of Rs. 159 lakhs, the revenue realised is only 42.4 lakhs. This is a recurring cost. The committee had no substantive comment.

#### UTTAR PRADESH PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Table X.A.5 below provides information regarding some representative data of Uttar Pradesh Public Accounts Committee reports together with data from the relevant audit reports of C&AG. We observe the usual time-lag of 3 to 6 years between the two.



**Table X.A.5**  
**Reports of Uttar Pradesh**  
**Public Accounts Committee**

| <b>Report</b>                            | <b>Date presented to Assembly</b> | <b>Reference C&amp;AG's report for year</b> | <b>No. of Years between</b> |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1976-77</b> |                                   |                                             |                             |
| First Report                             | 13 May.1978                       | 1972-73                                     | 5 to 6                      |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1981-82</b> |                                   |                                             |                             |
| First Report                             | 30 Jul.1981                       | 1975-76                                     | 5 to 6                      |
| Second to Third Report                   | 21 Sep.1981                       | 1974-75 to 1976-77                          | 4 to 6                      |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1982-83</b> |                                   |                                             |                             |
| First to Fifth Report                    | 2 Sep.1983                        | 1979-80                                     | 3 to 4                      |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1983-84</b> |                                   |                                             |                             |
| First Report                             | 15 Feb.1984                       | 1980-81                                     | 3 to 4                      |
| <b>Public Accounts Committee 1986-87</b> |                                   |                                             |                             |
| Fourth Report                            | 25 Aug.1987                       | 1982-83                                     | 4 to 5                      |

There are several Action Taken Reports which easily go back to issues that were raised 10 to 15 years ago.

### **Case studies from the reports of PAC Uttar Pradesh**

We provide below two representative cases from different PAC reports of the Uttar Pradesh state assembly.

## Case I

This item pertained to the construction of a tube well which was never used. During 1975, the Water Department had erected two tube wells at the cost of Rs.2.81 lakhs against an official sanction of Rs.1.20 lakhs, an overrun of 134%. But one of these became unservicable from Dec. 1976. The department spent another Rs. 9500 in June 1980, after three and a half years of inspection but the tubewell still did not work. Meanwhile the department had to continue paying electric connection fee for this tubewell amounting to Rs. 12,000 in Dec. 1976. In addition Rs. 1000 was being paid as an annual fee. Relevant excerpts from 1987-88 UP Public Accounts Committee's Fifth report, page 15, on this case are reproduced below:

The department informed in Dec. 1977 and again in May 1982 that the resultant lack of water harmed the production of foundation seeds but an estimate of the losses was not available.

When questioned by the committee, the department gave information which clarified that both pumps, erected by the same company, were constructed with sub-standard pipes and despite several repairs the pumps did not work.

The committee clearly found that despite the water department having been informed in time, and despite a lot of correspondence on the subject, the department took three and a half years to have any repair work undertaken. Meanwhile for the repairs also further monetary sanction were obtained.

This matter was being investigated for a long time. The 1983-84 Public Accounts Committee had taken evidence from the departmental officers on 10th February 1984 and asked for clarifications from the department. The replies were sent on 29 May 1984. The committee was informed that after further expenses of about Rs. 50,000. An enquiry was instituted to ascertain whether the tube well were sub-standard and who were the officials responsible for it and whether the firm was penalised.

However, as of October 1988, no further information was available and the committee recommended the following:

**The department has not given any valid reason for the defective operation of these two tubewells. Mechanical failures have been stressed but the committee, after going through the audit objections and the department's clarification, feels that the main reasons were the lax attitude of the**

**officials concerned. The committee expresses doubts that the sub-standard material is being used wilfully.**

**The committee is surprised that even after so much time having elapsed, the investigation is not complete and no responsibility on any officers have been fixed. The committee denounces such attitude and recommends that a proper investigation must be carried out and once responsibility is determined the officials concerned should be dealt with firmly so that misuse of governments resources is punished and an example is set for others.**

However, the PAC has no powers to implement any of its recommendations, and an investigation of available subsequent Action Taken Reports (ATRs) showed that no further progress was achieved in the matter. And surely the PAC of India's largest state should be devoting time to financially more important issues of which there is no shortage!

## **Case II**

This related to a malpractice in agricultural farms owned by the government. In many cases the number of labour employed was over twice the limits set by the government's own rules. The relevant excerpts from 1987-88 Public Accounts Committee's fifth report, page 7, are reproduced below:

Audit objection was raised that Director of Agriculture had formed rules for the employment of labour by the government for working on its farms. After a sample check of several farms in different districts, the C&AG found that between 1977-78 to 1981-82, against a requirement of 237,796 workers, 510,303 workers had been contracted - an overrun of 115%. This resulted in an extra expenditure of Rs. 15.97 lakhs (1.59 million). Despite enquiry in June 1982, the auditors were not provided any clarification in this regard till Nov. 1982.

The department informed the committee in writing on 3rd February, 1984 that the audit allegation was correct and that some action was initiated against the concerned officers. During their meeting with the committee the department admitted that no enquiry was made regarding other farms which had not been included in the audit sample. The committee directed the department to conduct an enquiry and report back. This resulted in the information that in most farms

considerably higher number of labourers was employed. Generally well over double the sanctioned limits.

(With this background, the following is the committee's response):

**The committee had directed the department (in Feb.,1984) that the following districts should be investigated, Barabanki, Gorakhpur, Hardoi, and Muzaffarnagar. However, the department only provided information about Hardoi and Muzaffarnagar and not about the other two districts. The committee is not satisfied by this approach of the department. The committee expresses its deep dissatisfaction. In the May 23, 1984 meeting the departmental officials were directed that at least a Dy. Secretary should investigate the issue. In the meeting held on 23rd July, 1984 the committee was informed that the senior officers were busy and therefore no investigation had been possible. The committee clarified that it suspected that fictional muster roles must have been prepared which should be investigated by a senior officer. But the committee has not been informed whether this issue is checked.**

**The committee believes that the department has taken the affair lightly and that there seems an effort to cover-up. Therefore, the committee recommends that the departmental secretary should investigate the issue and if the committee's instructions have not been followed the concerned officials should be punished.**

**Based on all information made available to it, the committee concludes that the rules which were fixed for employment of labour in government farms, have been ignored in several districts. Committee feels that the officials at district level are clearly not under any control of the senior officials of the department. Even the accountants at district level have not bothered to regularize the matter in any way. Committee recommends that action should be taken against the guilty officers and steps should be taken to avoid repetition of the same in future. Committee also recommends that action should be taken against the accountants who failed in their job. The committee should be informed of the action taken.**

Once again a survey of subsequent Action Taken Reports showed that nothing further happened.

This case further reaffirms our argument that the committee is ineffective. The enquiry started in 1982, and at least until 1987-88 there were no answers and no action. The standard recommendation of the PAC that action *should* be taken means precious little.

## PART TWO: VIEWS ON NATIONAL ISSUES

Thus far we have concentrated on the MLAs within their state environment, examining their socio-economic background, political, constituency and assembly activity, role perceptions, and views on issues that routinely affect them. Chapters XI to XVII view them as a part of India's political elite and enquire into their perception of India's problems.

In Chapter I we argued that politics in the post-Nehru period has been progressive regionalised: given India's social and cultural diversity, its political arrangements - a multi-party and adult franchise system<sup>1</sup> - are geared to move progressively in this direction as each successive generation of politicians has found it expedient to subject the 'traditional' masses to powerful electoral appeals based on ethnic, caste, communal, or regional identities. This apart, Indian states have extensive powers in most fields (though often concurrent with the Centre) which include agriculture, land reforms, industry (subject to Union regulations), and education (except scientific and some higher education). This gives the state governments substantial powers of patronage. These powers are further enhanced by the fact that most of the Centre's developmental projects and policies are handled at state-level, which means that this is where economic and political spoils are mainly distributed.

State politics is also closer to the people as it is the state-level institutions - *inter alia* the police, local courts, land revenue administration, local cooperatives for seeds and fertilizers - that people have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. In these

---

<sup>1</sup> Constitutionally universal suffrage in India gave voting rights to all Indian citizens of 21 years and older. This age limit was reduced to 18 years by Rajiv Gandhi's government (1989). In terms of numbers this, in 1989, meant 498 million voters (Source: *India Decides* 1991, op. cit.)

circumstances, state politics has gained in importance over time, and the resultant role that MLAs can play in India's development has become more critical. In this context, the combined number of some 4000 MLAs representing all states become key players in determining the developmental future of India.

We investigated whether the MLAs felt close to "local" issues and distant from what may be termed as *national* issues, some of which might exist beyond their immediate vicinity and concern. However, the latter are potentially, of course, of concern in varying degrees in most Indian states.

The MLAs, as state-level political elites, are a select group in India, each one representing an average 125,000 voters (the actual figure ranges between about 100,000 to about 500,000 voters depending on the state and constituency). The question is: do they have any feel for the larger canvas of Indian problems, or are they fully immersed in their own constituency and state politics with general disregard for issues that are beyond their immediate concern? If the MLAs are indeed the 'gap-closers' or instruments of 'elite-mass integration',<sup>2</sup> their knowledge and identification with problems that India faces at macro-level would help facilitate communication between the apex and the base of the polity. At a time when there are considerable economic changes taking place in India (1984 onwards and in particular economic liberalisation after 1991), this aspect assumes even greater importance. We have tried to investigate whether this is the case.

We start with the results of a general question asking the MLAs to identify India's main problems. We follow this with focused questions on some of India's specific

---

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter I

problems such as over-population and poverty, corruption, caste-based affirmative action, Panchayati Raj, Centre-state relations, and National Integration. Where appropriate, we compare the response between states and between political parties by developing weighted indices. As the following chapters will show, there is considerable variance in the response pattern of MLAs from different states as well as from different political parties.

## **XI. INDIA'S MOST CRITICAL PROBLEMS**

The first enquiry in this section of our interview was to ask the MLAs to identify India's five most critical problems. This was an open-ended question as we did not wish to guide them to a stereotyped response. Given the freedom to express what they found of critical importance, we expected to get a fair idea of India's performance and prospects from their perspective. The responses resulted in a long list of problems from which we have pulled out those which featured in the response of a minimum of fifteen percent of the MLAs in any one state, except Haryana where (in view of a smaller N) the cut-off point was placed at 20%. Most problems as listed are unambiguous, but a clarification may be required for the following two: "Unequal Growth" represented concern that development in different states and between different regions of individual states was uneven, creating both inter-state and intra-state imbalances; and "Poor Political System" referred to the lack of accountability in the political system and the decay in political culture in terms of electoral corruption and violence. The response of our sample is presented in table XI.1 below:



**Table XI.1**  
**What MLAs Perceive to be**  
**India's Most Critical Problems**

| PROBLEM               | Haryana |            | Maharashtra |            | Tamilnadu |            | West Bengal |            | Uttar Pradesh |            | Total |            |
|-----------------------|---------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|---------------|------------|-------|------------|
|                       | No.     | %          | No.         | %          | No.       | %          | No.         | %          | No.           | %          | No.   | %          |
| Balance of Payments   | 1       | 7%         | 1           | 2%         | 1         | 3%         | 15          | 33%        | 12            | 18%        | 30    | 14%        |
| Unequal Growth        | 3       | 20%        | 9           | 21%        | 2         | 5%         | 2           | 4%         | 4             | 6%         | 20    | 10%        |
| Inflation             | 4       | 27%        | 10          | 24%        | 4         | 11%        | 7           | 16%        | 8             | 12%        | 33    | 16%        |
| Poor Development      | 2       | 13%        | 8           | 19%        | 4         | 11%        | 4           | 9%         | 3             | 4%         | 21    | 10%        |
| Poverty               | 2       | 13%        | 11          | 26%        | 8         | 21%        | 9           | 20%        | 16            | 24%        | 46    | 22%        |
| Unemployment          | 5       | <b>33%</b> | 21          | 50%        | 14        | 37%        | 28          | <b>62%</b> | 31            | <b>46%</b> | 99    | <b>48%</b> |
| Over-population       | 3       | 20%        | 13          | 31%        | 7         | 18%        | 4           | 9%         | 28            | 42%        | 55    | 27%        |
| National Integration  | 3       | 20%        | 16          | 38%        | 9         | 24%        | 17          | 38%        | 8             | 12%        | 53    | 26%        |
| Communalism           | 3       | 20%        | 25          | <b>60%</b> | 23        | <b>61%</b> | 23          | 51%        | 14            | 21%        | 88    | 43%        |
| Secession/Terrorism   | 5       | <b>33%</b> | 6           | 14%        | 11        | 29%        | 7           | 16%        | 24            | 36%        | 53    | 26%        |
| Corruption            | 3       | 20%        | 8           | 19%        | 8         | 21%        | 4           | 9%         | 21            | 31%        | 44    | 21%        |
| Reservations/Casteism |         | 0%         | 7           | 17%        | 5         | 13%        | 5           | 11%        | 8             | 12%        | 25    | 12%        |
| Education             | 2       | 13%        | 8           | 19%        | 7         | 18%        | 11          | 24%        | 27            | 40%        | 55    | 27%        |
| Illiteracy            |         | 0%         |             | 0%         | 2         | 5%         | 10          | 22%        | 5             | 7%         | 17    | 8%         |
| Poor Moral Values     | 4       | 27%        |             | 0%         | 1         | 3%         | 6           | 13%        | 11            | 16%        | 22    | 11%        |
| Poor Political System | 1       | 7%         | 2           | 5%         | 4         | 11%        | 2           | 4%         | 11            | 16%        | 20    | 10%        |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response. For each state and the total, the highest response is in bold.

In Haryana, two problems “Secession” and “Unemployment” were identified by the highest proportion (33%) of MLAs. The next highest proportion (27%) cited “Inflation” and “Poor Moral Values”. One-fifth each listed “Corruption”, “Communalism”, “Unequal Growth”, “National Integration”, and “Over-population”. The data in respect of Haryana compared to the other four states are presented in table XI.2 below:

**Table XI.2**  
**Views of Haryana MLAs**  
**compared to aggregated views of**  
**all MLAs from the other four states**

| PROBLEM                 | Percent of<br>Haryana<br>MLAs | Percent of<br>MLAs from<br>other states | Variance<br>between<br>col.2 & 3 |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Secession/Terrorism  | 33%                           | 25%                                     | +8%                              |
| 2. Unemployment         | 33%                           | 49%                                     | -16%                             |
| 3. Inflation            | 27%                           | 15%                                     | +12%                             |
| 4. Poor Moral Values    | 27%                           | 9%                                      | +18%                             |
| 5. National Integration | 20%                           | 26%                                     | -6%                              |
| 6. Communalism          | 20%                           | 44%                                     | -24%                             |
| 7. Corruption           | 20%                           | 21%                                     | -1%                              |
| 8. Unequal Growth       | 20%                           | 9%                                      | +11%                             |
| 9. Over-population      | 20%                           | 27%                                     | -7%                              |

N=15. Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response.

We do not observe any single overwhelming concern: the response in Haryana is evenly spread. Our findings are in line with those reported by P D Sharma. Of his sample of Haryana MLAs in 1974 (N=60), the largest proportion of 27% had identified “Unemployment”.<sup>3</sup>

In Maharashtra, we see a much larger emphasis on “Communalism” and “Unemployment”. All problems listed by 15% or more MLAs in Maharashtra, together with the corresponding response of MLAs from the other states, are listed in table XI.3 below:

---

<sup>3</sup> P D Sharma, *Legislative Elite in India: A Study in Political Socialization*, op.cit., p.88.

**Table XI.3**  
**Views of Maharashtra MLAs**  
**compared to aggregated views of**  
**all MLAs from the other four states**

| <b>PROBLEM</b>          | <b>Percent of Maharashtra MLAs</b> | <b>Percent of MLAs from other states</b> | <b>Variance between col.2 &amp; 3</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Communalism          | 60%                                | 38%                                      | +22%                                  |
| 2. Unemployment         | 50%                                | 47%                                      | +3%                                   |
| 3. National Integration | 38%                                | 22%                                      | +16%                                  |
| 4. Over-Population      | 31%                                | 25%                                      | +6%                                   |
| 5. Poverty              | 26%                                | 21%                                      | +5%                                   |
| 6. Inflation            | 24%                                | 14%                                      | +10%                                  |
| 7. Unequal Growth       | 21%                                | 7%                                       | +14%                                  |
| 8. Poor Development     | 19%                                | 8%                                       | +11%                                  |
| 9. Corruption           | 19%                                | 22%                                      | -3%                                   |
| 10. Education           | 19%                                | 28%                                      | -9%                                   |
| 11. Secession/Terrorism | 14%                                | 28%                                      | -14%                                  |

N = 42. Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response.

In Maharashtra, “Communalism” headed the list of critical problems facing the country with a 60% response from the MLAs. The next was “Unemployment” with 50%, and third “National Integration” with 38% response. Communalism and national integration are linked, and relate to similar apprehensions. We observe a much higher sensitivity to “Unequal Growth” (21%) as compared to the other states (7%) and a lower sensitivity to “Secession/Terrorism” at 14% compared to 28% for the other four states.

In Tamilnadu, the highest proportion of MLAs (61%) followed the Maharashtra example by identifying “Communalism”. “Unemployment” was listed by 37% of the MLAs and the next was “Secession/Terrorism” at 29%. A small proportion of Tamilnadu MLAs identified three local problems that were unique to the state’s response: Poor Irrigation - Tamilnadu 11%, Overall 4%; Language - 11% and 3%; and Sri Lanka - 11% and 3%. This perception of the Tamilnadu MLAs, particularly

regarding irrigation, clearly comes from their own specific problems but it is interesting to see how these take on national dimensions in the minds of the local political elite. All problems listed by 15 % or more MLAs in Tamilnadu together with the corresponding response of the total sample are listed in table XI.4 below:

**Table XI.4**  
**Views of Tamilnadu MLAs**  
**compared to aggregated views of**  
**all MLAs from the other four states.**

| <b>PROBLEM</b>          | <b>Percent of<br/>Tamilnadu<br/>MLAs</b> | <b>Percent of<br/>MLAs from<br/>other states</b> | <b>Variance<br/>between<br/>Col. 2 &amp; 3</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Communalism          | 61%                                      | 38%                                              | +23%                                           |
| 2. Unemployment         | 37%                                      | 50%                                              | -13%                                           |
| 3. Secession/Terrorism  | 29%                                      | 25%                                              | +4%                                            |
| 4. National Integration | 24%                                      | 26%                                              | -2%                                            |
| 5. Corruption           | 21%                                      | 21%                                              | 0%                                             |
| 6. Poverty              | 21%                                      | 22%                                              | -1%                                            |
| 7. Education            | 18%                                      | 28%                                              | -10%                                           |
| 8. Over-population      | 18%                                      | 28%                                              | -10%                                           |

N = 38. Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response.

West Bengal displayed a much higher sensitivity to "Unemployment": 62% of its MLAs - the highest proportion among all states - identified it as one of the most critical problems facing India. "Communalism" was second with 51% response. "National Integration" came next with 38%, followed by "Balance of Payments" (33%). The main reason why this particular problem i.e., balance of payments, received comparatively little mention in the states of Haryana, Maharashtra and Tamilnadu may well be because this issue had not yet come on the national media in a big way. India's balance of payment difficulties were only highlighted once the Cong.I government took office in the summer of 1991. By this time we had already completed our field work in the above-mentioned three states.

In West Bengal, all problems listed by 15% or more MLAs, together with the corresponding response from the other four states, are listed in table XI.5 below:

**Table XI.5**  
**Views of West Bengal MLAs**  
**compared to aggregated views of**  
**all MLAs from the other four states**

| PROBLEM                 | Percent of West Bengal MLAs | Percent of MLAs from other states | Variance between col.2 & 3 |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Unemployment         | 62%                         | 44 %                              | +18%                       |
| 2. Communalism          | 51%                         | 40%                               | +11%                       |
| 3. National Integration | 38%                         | 22%                               | +16%                       |
| 4. Balance of Payments  | 33%                         | 9%                                | +24%                       |
| 5. Education            | 24%                         | 27%                               | -3%                        |
| 6. Illiteracy           | 22%                         | 4%                                | +18%                       |
| 7. Poverty              | 20%                         | 23%                               | -3%                        |
| 8. Secession/Terrorism  | 16%                         | 28%                               | -12%                       |
| 9. Inflation            | 16%                         | 16%                               | 0%                         |

N = 45. Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response.

The following two problems were stated by less than 10% of West Bengal MLAs, but by 15% or more of the combined sample of MLAs from all states: "Over-population" - West Bengal 9%, Overall 27%, and "Corruption" - 9% and 21%. This is a paradox particularly when one considers two points. First, that in terms of population West Bengal is the most densely populated state in India.<sup>4</sup> The State's capital, Calcutta, is an extremely crowded city where civic amenities are at breaking point. According to WHO Calcutta is the World's most congested city with a density of 100,000 to 125,000 persons per sq.Km. By comparison Delhi is 40,000 and New York is

---

<sup>4</sup> Density of population in West Bengal at 765 (1981-615) is now the highest in India. Till 1981, Kerala was the most densely populated state of India but now it has fallen to second position at 747 (1981-655). For India as a whole, the density of population is 267. The other states in our study have the following densities of population: Haryana 369, Maharashtra 255, Tamilnadu 427, and Uttar Pradesh 472. (Figures computed from the 1991 Census, provisional figures)

28000;<sup>5</sup> and second, that most of the West Bengal MLAs listed unemployment as a critical problem, and unemployment is clearly one of the results of unabated population increase. Taking into account these two points, it becomes difficult to understand why West Bengal MLAs did not articulate this problem. In addition, to our specific question whether India was over-populated, 64% of West Bengal MLAs agreed (Chapter XII). The ratio from among the ranks of the ruling Left-front alone was not much different at 58%. In addition, 39% of the ruling front had also added that over-population was a critical problem for India; but, on their own, only a marginal 9% felt that over-population was a problem. Clearly, the issue of over-population is not of prime concern in West Bengal, mainly with CPI(M) MLAs.

As regards the second issue, when we posed a specific question on corruption, 78% of the West Bengal MLAs agreed that corruption was on the increase (Chapter XIII). From the ranks of the ruling party itself, 72% had agreed. To our question whether this problem was critical for India, half the sample (49%) had responded “yes”, yet only 9% of them spontaneously identified corruption as a problem. Part of the explanation may lie in the fact that corruption has become so much a part of day to day life that it is no longer viewed as a special problem. This is illustrated by Maheshwari, who quotes the comments of an MP: “corruption is now regarded as but a part of life. If by greasing an official’s palm the work gets done, it is no longer a grievance as such, But if even after bribing nothing gets done, it becomes a grievance”.<sup>6</sup> This vivid description of how corruption is regarded as a part of life might be a partial explanation of why sometimes corruption is not perceived as a critical problem.

---

<sup>5</sup> Cited in *Frontline*, September 2-15, 1989.

<sup>6</sup> Shriram Maheshwari, *Political Development in India*, (New Delhi: Concept, 1984) p. 27.

In Uttar Pradesh there was a three way split in their response. “Unemployment” was identified by almost half the sample (46%), “Over-population” by 42%, and “Education” at 40% - clearly the highest proportion from any of our states. This latter response may be partly explained by the fact that our sample from Uttar Pradesh had the highest proportion of MLAs who were educated to the level of “Graduates or above” (78%).<sup>7</sup>

A counter-intuitive finding, so far as Uttar Pradesh is concerned, was that only 21% of the MLAs felt that “Communalism” was a critical national problem. We can contrast this with 60% in Maharashtra, 61% in Tamilnadu, and 51% in West Bengal. It is clearly more in line with the 20% of Haryana. Both of these states are in North India, which is the scene of most communal tensions. One might therefore have expected them to show a higher sensitivity to this problem. However, the actual response here is contrary to this intuition. Perhaps “Communalism” is differently defined by MLAs in these two states, and the patterns of behaviour which appear communal to others are not seen in the same light.

Those problems which were expressed by at least 15% of the Uttar Pradesh MLAs, together with the corresponding combined response from the other four states, are listed in table XI.6 below:

---

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter III

**Table XI.6**  
**Views of Uttar Pradesh MLAs**  
**compared to aggregated views of**  
**all MLAs from the other four states**

| <b>PROBLEM</b>            | <b>Percent of<br/>Uttar Pradesh<br/>MLAs</b> | <b>Percent of<br/>MLAs from<br/>other states</b> | <b>Variance<br/>between<br/>col.2 &amp; 3</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1. Unemployment           | 46%                                          | 48%                                              | -2%                                           |
| 2. Over-population        | 42%                                          | 19%                                              | +23%                                          |
| 3. Education              | 40%                                          | 20%                                              | +20%                                          |
| 4. Corruption             | 31%                                          | 16%                                              | +15%                                          |
| 5. Secession/Terrorism    | 28%                                          | 20%                                              | +8%                                           |
| 6. Poverty                | 24%                                          | 21%                                              | +3%                                           |
| 7. Communalism            | 21%                                          | 53%                                              | -32%                                          |
| 8. Balance of Payments    | 18%                                          | 13%                                              | +5%                                           |
| 9. Poor Moral Values      | 16%                                          | 8%                                               | +8%                                           |
| 10. Poor Political System | 16%                                          | 6%                                               | +10%                                          |

**N = 67.** Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response.

There was a substantial gap between the other states and Uttar Pradesh on “National Integration”, with their respective responses being 32% and 12% (table XI.1), presumably related to UP’s response on communalism.

Taking all the states together, five problems that were identified by the largest proportion from our sample of MLAs are listed in table XI.7 below. We observe a considerable variance in the response of MLAs from different states.



**Table XI.7**  
**Five Most Critical Problems of India**  
**(Variance in Response)**

| Problem                 | Percent of Total MLAs | Highest response | State                     | Lowest response | State         |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. Unemployment         | 48%                   | 62%              | West Bengal               | 33%             | Haryana       |
| 2. Communalism          | 40%                   | 61%              | Tamilnadu                 | 20%             | Haryana       |
| 3. Education            | 27%                   | 40%              | Uttar Pradesh             | 13%             | Haryana       |
| 4. Over-population      | 27%                   | 42%              | Uttar Pradesh             | 9%              | West Bengal   |
| 5. National Integration | 26%                   | 38%              | Maharashtra & West Bengal | 12%             | Uttar Pradesh |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

Apart from these five, “Poverty” and “Corruption” were pointed out by 22% and 21% of MLAs respectively. By combining the responses that identified National Integration and Secession (eliminating duplicates), we find that 38% of the MLAs showed concern about preserving the territorial integrity of India. It is a little alarming coming from state-level politicians who, by virtue of being in touch with their constituents, may be reflecting a deeply felt concern at the base.

The responses of the legislators to this question are revealing. We know that MLAs receive scores of visitors daily, and that most of these come to them with personal problems and requests (Chapter V). One of the main requests faced by the legislators is for help in securing employment. This particular issue of unemployment, therefore, appeared to be uppermost in the minds of most MLAs. Other studies point to a similar response pattern. We have already mentioned P D Sharma’s study of Haryana MLAs, where the largest proportion of his sample identified unemployment as a critical problem. Shashi Lata Puri, in her study of Rajasthan MLAs, encountered an overwhelming proportion of MLAs (80%) who felt that unemployment was among India’s most critical problems.<sup>8</sup> Issues of economic development, concerned as they

<sup>8</sup> Shashi Lata Puri, *Legislative Elite in an Indian State (A case Study of Rajasthan)* op. cit.

are with reduction of widespread poverty at lower levels of society, did not receive recognition from as large a proportion of MLAs as one would expect in the poor surroundings of Indian state-level politics. Even when we add up (eliminating duplicates) the number of MLAs who pointed to three related problems, viz., unequal growth, poor development, and poverty, we find that 35 % of all MLAs are included. In itself, it may be a significant ratio, but not when it is related to the economic reality that surrounds MLAs, their constituents being predominantly poor. The answer again may be in the fact that poverty is ubiquitous in the Indian countryside and is taken for granted. The same may be true of over-population and corruption. The way in which these problems have become a part of people's daily life appears to have obscured their enormity so that these are no longer uppermost in the minds of the political elites. As regards over-population, with estimates of one billion by the turn of the century,<sup>9</sup> the fact that only 27 % of all MLAs felt that over-population was a critical problem could be a contributory reason for the ineffectiveness of family planning policies. When leadership at intermediate and local level has not been educated as to the severity of the problem, can we expect that the people at large would be concerned in any significant way?

### **India's Most Critical Problems (Party-wise)**

The party-wise data relating to identifying India's five most critical problems are presented below in table XI.8. As in the case of state-wise analysis of our entire sample, we have pulled out those problems which featured in the response of a minimum fifteen percent of MLAs of any one political party except DMK in whose case, because of a small N, the cut-off point was placed at 20 %.

---

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter XII

**Table XI.8**  
**What MLAs perceive to be**  
**India's Most Critical Problems**  
**(Party-wise)**

| PROBLEM               | Cong.I |     | CPI(M) |     | BJP |     | DMK |     | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|-----------------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                       | No.    | %   | No.    | %   | No. | %   | No. | %   | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| Balance of Payments   | 3      | 6%  | 12     | 36% | 6   | 15% | 1   | 5%  | 5          | 14% | 27    | 15% |
| Inflation             | 5      | 10% | 6      | 18% | 8   | 21% | 3   | 16% | 7          | 19% | 29    | 16% |
| Poor Development      | 8      | 15% | 2      | 6%  | 0   | 0%  | 2   | 11% | 3          | 8%  | 15    | 8%  |
| Poverty               | 12     | 23% | 7      | 21% | 8   | 21% | 3   | 16% | 11         | 30% | 41    | 23% |
| Unemployment          | 22     | 42% | 22     | 67% | 1   | 41% | 8   | 42% | 20         | 54% | 88    | 49% |
| Over-population       | 21     | 40% | 1      | 3%  | 8   | 21% | 4   | 21% | 14         | 38% | 48    | 27% |
| National Integration  | 14     | 27% | 18     | 55% | 6   | 15% | 5   | 26% | 4          | 11% | 47    | 26% |
| Communalism           | 24     | 46% | 22     | 67% | 10  | 26% | 13  | 68% | 10         | 27% | 79    | 44% |
| Secession/Terrorism   | 6      | 12% | 8      | 24% | 15  | 38% | 6   | 32% | 11         | 30% | 46    | 26% |
| Corruption            | 13     | 25% | 1      | 3%  | 14  | 36% | 1   | 5%  | 9          | 24% | 38    | 21% |
| Education             | 13     | 25% | 7      | 21% | 14  | 36% | 2   | 11% | 12         | 32% | 48    | 27% |
| Illiteracy            | 4      | 8%  | 8      | 24% | 1   | 3%  | 0   | 0%  | 2          | 5%  | 15    | 8%  |
| Poor Moral values     | 3      | 6%  | 3      | 9%  | 9   | 23% | 1   | 5%  | 3          | 8%  | 19    | 11% |
| Poor political system | 4      | 8%  | 0      | 0%  | 8   | 21% | 1   | 5%  | 5          | 14% | 18    | 10% |
| Land Reforms          | 0      | 0%  | 6      | 18% | 0   | 0%  | 0   | 0%  | 0          | 0%  | 6     | 3%  |

N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

From Cong.I, the highest proportion of MLAs (46%) identified “Communalism” as one of the most critical problems faced by India. “Unemployment” (42%), and “Overpopulation” (40%) closely followed. “National Integration” (27%), “Corruption” and “Education” (both 25%) and “Poverty” (23%) were mentioned by a quarter of the sample. The data relating to the problems listed by at least 15% of the Cong.I MLAs, compared to the aggregated response of all MLAs from the other four parties, are presented in table XI.9 below:

**Table XI.9**  
**Views of Cong.I MLAs**  
**compared to aggregated views of**  
**all MLAs from the other four parties**

| <b>PROBLEM</b>          | <b>Percent<br/>Cong.I<br/>MLAs</b> | <b>Percent<br/>MLAs from<br/>other parties</b> | <b>Variance<br/>between<br/>col.2 &amp; col.3</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Communalism          | 46%                                | 43%                                            | +3%                                               |
| 2. Unemployment         | 42%                                | 52%                                            | -10%                                              |
| 3. Over-population      | 40%                                | 21%                                            | <b>+19%</b>                                       |
| 4. National Integration | 27%                                | 26%                                            | 1%                                                |
| 5. Education            | 25%                                | 27%                                            | -2%                                               |
| 6. Corruption           | 25%                                | 20%                                            | +5%                                               |
| 7. Poverty              | 23%                                | 23%                                            | 0%                                                |
| 8. Poor Development     | 15%                                | 5%                                             | +10%                                              |

Note: N = Cong.I 52, CPI(M) 33, BJP 39, DMK 19, Janata Dal 37, and Total 180.  
 Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response

Cong.I MLAs decidedly considered over-population a far bigger problem than MLAs from other parties with the exception of Janata Dal who at 38% were a close second. This is the only problem where Cong.I showed perceptible divergence from the general opinion as shown in column 4 of table XI.9.

Of the CPI(M) legislators most identified "Communalism" and "Unemployment" (both 67%) as critical problems facing India. The next was "National Integration" (55%). About two-fifths of West Bengal MLAs - the highest proportion from among our five parties- identified "Balance of Payments". This finding should be treated with caution, as this particular issue was splashed over the national media only after the summer of 1991, by which time our field work in Haryana, Maharashtra and Tamilnadu was over.

There were two problems which were identified by more than 15% of CPI(M) MLAs but by less than 10% of the MLAs when all the five parties were taken together.

These were “Illiteracy” as distinct from “Poor Education” (24% and 8%)<sup>10</sup>, and “Land Reforms” (18% and 0%). In identifying the latter, CPI(M) MLAs were unique among the five parties. All problems listed by 15% or more MLAs of CPI(M), together with the corresponding aggregated response from the other four parties, are listed in table XI.10 below:

**Table XI.10**  
**Views of CPI(M) MLAs**  
**compared to aggregated views of**  
**all MLAs from the other four parties**

| <b>PROBLEM</b>          | <b>Percent of<br/>CPI(M)<br/>MLAs</b> | <b>Percent of<br/>MLAs from<br/>other parties</b> | <b>Difference<br/>between<br/>col.2 &amp; col.3</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Communalism          | 67%                                   | 39%                                               | <b>+28%</b>                                         |
| 2. Unemployment         | 67%                                   | 45%                                               | <b>+22%</b>                                         |
| 3. National Integration | 55%                                   | 20%                                               | <b>+35%</b>                                         |
| 4. Balance of Payments  | 36%                                   | 10%                                               | <b>+26%</b>                                         |
| 5. Secession/Terrorism  | 24%                                   | 26%                                               | <b>-2%</b>                                          |
| 6. Illiteracy           | 24%                                   | 5%                                                | <b>+19%</b>                                         |
| 7. Poor Education       | 21%                                   | 28%                                               | <b>-7%</b>                                          |
| 8. Poverty              | 21%                                   | 23%                                               | <b>-2%</b>                                          |
| 9. Land Reforms         | 18%                                   | 1%                                                | <b>+17%</b>                                         |
| 10. Inflation           | 18%                                   | 16%                                               | <b>+2%</b>                                          |

Note: N = CPI(M) 33, Total 180.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response.

The much higher than average emphasis on “Communalism” and “National Integration” shows the concern in the ranks of CPI(M) about the general declining trend in the political culture where divisions along numerous alliances have been encouraged by most political parties in order to forge electoral strategies. Further, the much higher emphasis on “Balance of Payments” may have indicated a concern with

---

<sup>10</sup> The line between these two can be quite thin, but the CPI(M) MLAs seemed to know what they meant. “Not everyone can have education but everyone must be literate” remarked one CPI(M) MLA. Clearly, the accent is on some basic ability to read and write and not on formal schooling. Recently, a major drive was launched by the CPI(M) to achieve 100% literacy in one of the districts of West Bengal.

macro-economic issues that was imperceptible in other parties. However, we have to take account of the fact that this issue was not on the national media during the earlier part of our field work in some other states.

One salient feature of the CPI(M) MLAs was their response on two issues, "Over-population" and "Corruption". No matter how much we try to justify this lack of sensitivity, it remains difficult to understand a marginal response of just 3% for each of these. It would be absurd to believe that CPI(M) legislators do not understand that the unabated growth of population is a critical problem. To our direct question about over-population, 57% of CPI(M) MLAs had responded in the affirmative (Chapter XII). Even regarding corruption, in response to our specific question whether corruption had increased and whether it was a critical problem for India almost three-quarters of CPI(M) MLAs had said "yes" (Chapter XIII). Yet, when it came to identifying India's main problems on their own, almost all of them failed to talk about these two issues. We have observed earlier that the response of CPI(M) legislators is considerably leavened with their perception of what their party position might be. The most prominent example of this approach was their response (or lack of it) to our question about whether they would contest Lok Sabha if given a choice. A large proportion had refused to comment, on the pretext that this was a matter for their party to decide (Chapter VIII). Therefore, what appears likely is that these particular items are simply not on the CPI(M) agenda.

In BJP, we encountered a four way split response. Two-fifths each mentioned "Unemployment", "Secession/Terrorism", "Poor Education" and "Corruption". Next came "Communalism" at 26%, but far below the CPI(M) proportion of 67%. One-fifth each identified "Poor Moral Values" - the highest from among all our parties - and "Over-population". All problems listed by 15% or more MLAs in BJP, together

with the corresponding aggregated response from the other four parties, are listed in table XI.11 below:

**Table XI.11**  
**Views of BJP MLAs**  
**compared to aggregated views of**  
**all MLAs from the other four parties**

| <b>PROBLEM</b>           | <b>Percent of BJP MLAs</b> | <b>Percent of MLAs from other parties</b> | <b>Variance between col.2 &amp; col.3</b> |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1. Unemployment          | 41%                        | 51%                                       | -10%                                      |
| 2. Education             | 36%                        | 24%                                       | +12%                                      |
| 3. Corruption            | 36%                        | 17%                                       | +19%                                      |
| 4. Communalism           | 26%                        | 49%                                       | -23%                                      |
| 5. Secession/Terrorism   | 38%                        | 22%                                       | +16%                                      |
| 6. Poor Moral Values     | 23%                        | 7%                                        | +16%                                      |
| 7. Poverty               | 21%                        | 23%                                       | -2%                                       |
| 8. Poor Political System | 21%                        | 7%                                        | +14%                                      |
| 9. Inflation             | 21%                        | 15%                                       | +6%                                       |
| 10. Over-population      | 21%                        | 28%                                       | -7%                                       |
| 11. Balance of Payments  | 15%                        | 15%                                       | 0%                                        |
| 12. National Integration | 15%                        | 29%                                       | -14%                                      |

Note: N = BJP 39, Total 180.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response.

BJP demonstrated a higher concern with morality and ethics in politics as seen in their generally higher response to “Corruption”, “Poor Moral Values” and “Poor Political System”. But, only 26% of BJP MLAs mentioned “Communalism” as a critical national problem. Considering that the BJP came to power in Uttar Pradesh on a partly communal issue concerning the Ayodhya mosque (see Chapter III), this is a remarkably small proportion of MLAs pointing towards “Communalism” as a critical problem. This contrast with 46% of Cong.I, 67% of CPI(M), and 68% of DMK. But it is more in line with the 27% of Janata Dal, whose main strength was also in Uttar Pradesh.

In the case of DMK, five problems were over the 20% mark. The highest proportion of MLAs (68%) identified “Communalism”. “Unemployment” (42%), “Secession” (32%), “National Integration” (26%), and “Over-population” (21%) followed. These together with the corresponding aggregated response from the other four parties are presented in table XI.12 below:

**Table XI.12**  
**Views of DMK MLAs**  
**compared to aggregated views of**  
**all MLAs from the other four parties**

| <b>PROBLEM</b>          | <b>Percent of DMK MLAs</b> | <b>Percent of MLAs from other four parties</b> | <b>Variance between col.2 &amp; col.3</b> |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1. Communalism          | 68%                        | 41%                                            | +27%                                      |
| 2. Unemployment         | 42%                        | 50%                                            | -8%                                       |
| 3. Secession/Terrorism  | 32%                        | 25%                                            | +7%                                       |
| 4. National Integration | 26%                        | 26%                                            | 0%                                        |
| 5. Over-population      | 21%                        | 27%                                            | -6%                                       |

Note: N = DMK 19, Total 180.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response.

DMK MLAs also showed a high concern with “Communalism” as in the case of CPI(M), but the surprise was with their comparative lack of concern with “Education” (11%), coming as it did from a generally young crop of urbanised and educated legislators (table XI.8). The other issue which received almost no response (3%) from DMK legislators was “Corruption”. As in the case of CPI(M), when we specifically asked the DMK MLAs whether corruption was on the increase, 63% of the DMK MLAs had agreed. An even higher proportion of 76% responded “yes” to our question whether this problem was critical for India (Chapter XIII); but, on their own, hardly anyone identified corruption as a critical problem for India. This appears to reaffirm our earlier observation that widespread corruption appears to have created an element of insensitivity to the problem.



In Janata Dal, most MLAs (54%) identified “Unemployment”. The second was “Over-population” (38%), and the third was “Education” (32%). The next, “Poverty” at 30% was the highest proportion from among all the parties. In line with the BJP’s 26%, only 27% of the Janata Dal MLAs identified “Communalism” as a critical problem for India.

Those problems which were expressed by 15% or more of the Janata Dal MLAs together with the corresponding aggregated response from the other four parties are listed in the table XI.13 below:

**Table XI.13**  
**Views of Janata Dal MLAs**  
**compared to aggregated views of**  
**all MLAs from the other four parties**

| <b>PROBLEM</b>         | <b>Percent<br/>Janata Dal<br/>MLAs</b> | <b>Percent of<br/>MLAs from<br/>other parties</b> | <b>Variance<br/>between<br/>col.2 &amp; col.3</b> |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Unemployment        | 54%                                    | 48%                                               | +6%                                               |
| 2. Over-population     | 38%                                    | 24%                                               | +14%                                              |
| 3. Education           | 32%                                    | 25%                                               | +7%                                               |
| 4. Poverty             | 30%                                    | 21%                                               | +9%                                               |
| 5. Secession/Terrorism | 30%                                    | 24%                                               | +6%                                               |
| 6. Communalism         | 27%                                    | 48%                                               | -21%                                              |
| 7. Corruption          | 24%                                    | 20%                                               | +4%                                               |
| 8. Inflation           | 19%                                    | 15%                                               | +4%                                               |

Note: N = Janata Dal 37, Total 180.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response.

Taking all the parties together, the five problems that were pointed out by the largest proportion from our sample of MLAs are listed in the following table XI.14:

**Table XI.14**  
**Views of MLAs from the**  
**five parties aggregated to**  
**show five most identified problems**

| <b>Problem</b>          | <b>Percent of MLAs</b> | <b>Highest Response</b> | <b>Party</b> | <b>Lowest Response</b> | <b>Party</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Unemployment         | 49 %                   | 67 %                    | CPI(M)       | 41 %                   | BJP          |
| 2. Communalism          | 44 %                   | 68 %                    | DMK          | 26 %                   | BJP          |
| 3. Education            | 27 %                   | 36 %                    | BJP          | 11 %                   | DMK          |
| 4. Over-population      | 27 %                   | 40 %                    | Cong.I       | 3 %                    | CPI(M)       |
| 5. National Integration | 26 %                   | 55 %                    | CPI(M)       | 11 %                   | Janata Dal   |

Note: N = Cong.I 52, CPI(M) 33, BJP 39, DMK 19, Janata Dal 37, and Total 180.

These five main problems follow almost identically the pattern of the response when all the MLAs from all the states and *all* the political parties (as against only the main five parties) were taken into account (table XI.7). Apart from these five main issues, “Poverty” and “Corruption” received the response from 23 % and 21 % of the MLAs respectively. This table highlights the sensitivity of CPI(M) to “Unemployment” and equally its lack of sensitivity to “Over-population”; of DMK to “Communalism” and equally a lack of it to “Education”. BJP and Janata Dal demonstrate lack of sensitivity respectively to “Communalism” and “National Integration”, both related issues.

## **XII. VIEWS ON OVER-POPULATION AND POVERTY**

After having asked the MLAs to identify what they thought were India's most critical problems, we asked for their views specifically on India's current problems. The first set was the whole question of unremitting growth of population and the equally persistent poverty in India.

At the time of Independence in 1947, India's population was in the region of 340 million.<sup>1</sup> The 1991 census places this figure at 844 million, an increase of 250% in four decades.<sup>2</sup> Even between 1981 and 1991, the population went up from 685 million to the present figure at a decennial growth rate of 23.5%, only marginally lower than the 24.7% of the previous decade.

India's poor performance in controlling its population is one of the most serious failures of its post-Independence governments. Most estimates, including those made by the United Nations, place India's projected population by the turn of the century at over one billion and growing.<sup>3</sup> India and China, the world's two most populated countries, started their battle against the rate of growth of population at about the same time. But, according to available figures, China has been able to reduce its rate of growth of population at a much faster rate than India over the 40 odd years. Even estimates made by the United Nations indicate that by the middle of the next century

---

<sup>1</sup> Computed from S N Agarwala, *India's Population Problem* (Bombay: Tata McGraw Hill, 1973) p.41.

<sup>2</sup> Census of India, 1991 (Provisional figures)

<sup>3</sup> See United Nations, *World Population Projections: Two Centuries of Population Growth 1950-2150* (New York: UN, 1992)

India will have overtaken China as the most populous country of the world.<sup>4</sup> The consequences for the economy are serious on all fronts - food, housing, health, education and employment.<sup>5</sup>

Although India initiated a national family planning programme early in its post-Independence years, its implementation has remained patchy and poor.<sup>6</sup> Most targets for reducing the rate of growth of population were constantly revised and re-revised. Unfortunately for India, the effort at implementation that came during the period of Emergency between 1975 and 1977 was in the form of an extensively indiscriminate and coercive sterilisation campaign which, in the short run, pushed up dramatically the number of men sterilised, but decisively damaged the long-term prospects of the whole programme. In the 21 months of Emergency (1975-77), an estimated 11 million people were sterilised, mostly involuntarily, as compared with the previous year's figure of 1.3 million.<sup>7</sup> This coercion, mainly experienced in the Hindi-belt, became the primary reason for the politicisation of family planning and contributed significantly to Cong.I's electoral defeat throughout North India in the post-Emergency general elections in 1977. The new Janata Party government that took over from Cong.I telescoped the policy and the programme came to a virtual standstill. Symbolically, the Ministry of Health and Family Planning was also renamed Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.<sup>8</sup> With this background, we asked

---

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> See Sumati Kulkarni, 'Economic Implications of Population Growth in India' in K Srinivasan & S Mukerji (Eds.), *Dynamics of Population and Family Welfare in India* (Bombay: Popular Prakshan, 1979) pp. 15-31

<sup>6</sup> See D Banerji, 'Family Planning in India: Some Inhibiting Factors' in Ashis Bose et.al. (Eds.), *Population in India's Development: 1947 - 2000* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1974)

<sup>7</sup> J K Satia and Shireen J Jejeebhoy, *The Demographic Challenge: A Study of four Large Indian States* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1991) p.31

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

the MLAs for their views on the question of population explosion and on the related issue of poverty.

#### PERCEPTION OF OVER-POPULATION

We investigated this issue by posing two questions. First, we asked the MLAs whether they felt that India had a problem of over-population and whether they felt that this was a *critical* issue. The question was framed so as not to lead to a response set: “some people feel that India is over-populated, do you agree?” The second question, directed at those MLAs who answered the first one in the affirmative, enquired what measures would they recommend for family planning. The response to the first question is presented in table XII.1 below:

Table XII.1  
Views on Over-population

| STATE         | Is India Over-populated? |            |    |            | Is the problem critical |            |            |
|---------------|--------------------------|------------|----|------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|
|               | Yes                      | Percent    | No | Percent    | Yes                     | % of Col.2 | % of Total |
| Haryana       | 12                       | 80%        | 3  | 20%        | 8                       | 67%        | 53%        |
| Maharashtra   | 36                       | <b>86%</b> | 6  | 14%        | 33                      | 92%        | 79%        |
| Tamilnadu     | 32                       | 84%        | 6  | 16%        | 21                      | 66%        | 55%        |
| West Bengal   | 29                       | 64%        | 16 | <b>36%</b> | 22                      | 76%        | 49%        |
| Uttar Pradesh | 56                       | 84%        | 11 | 16%        | 54                      | <b>96%</b> | <b>81%</b> |
| TOTAL         | 165                      | 80%        | 42 | 20%        | 138                     | 84%        | 67%        |

N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

The highest and the lowest response is highlighted

There was an overwhelming affirmative response to the question, generally cutting across party lines except in the case of Haryana and West Bengal where, from the ranks of the ruling parties, 57% and 58% respectively replied in the affirmative but from among the opposition the corresponding figures were 100% and 89%.

We also asked those who replied in the affirmative whether they thought that this problem was critical for India. Two-thirds of those who had responded in the

affirmative to the first question, said “yes”: from the sample in Haryana 53 % (Ruling 29 %, Opposition 75 %); Maharashtra 92 % and 79 % (evenly spread); Tamilnadu 66 % and 55 % (evenly spread); West Bengal 76 % and 49 % (Ruling 39 %, Opposition 89 %); and, Uttar Pradesh 96 % and 81 % (evenly spread). Overall, two-thirds said that the problem was critical, but from among the ranks of only those who had responded that over-population was a problem, this proportion was an overwhelming 84 %.

We next asked those who agreed that population growth was a critical problem, which measures would they endorse for population control. We offered a multiple choice consisting of “Strong Disincentives”<sup>9</sup>, “Education” and “Compulsory Sterilisation”, but we did not insist that they limit their response to the suggested format. Two other categories were added as a result of the responses. Many MLAs were not happy about our suggested classification and said that ‘we have to get stricter’. Therefore, the first category that we added was “Stricter Measures” - indicating that the present voluntary and propaganda effort was not enough and the government had to become strict about the issue. This meant introducing strong incentives and disincentives, but it also referred to all direct and indirect strictness, short of compulsory sterilisation, to force people to limit their families. The second category that we had to add was a “Single Civil Code”. The MLAs who suggested this category related it mainly to the Muslim community, who are governed by the Muslim Personal Law which permits polygamy. It is sometimes argued that this is one of the reasons for the above average increase in the Muslim population in India.<sup>10</sup> Many localised studies also appear to endorse

---

<sup>9</sup> This would mean introduction of policies such as imposition of tax on additional children, withdrawal of free education for additional children, restrictions on availability of food grains through government fair-price shops etc.

<sup>10</sup> Last available figures (1981 census) indicate that the Muslim population has grown generally at a higher than average rate. In three of our sample states, Maharashtra, West Bengal and UP the decennial rate of growth (1971-81) of the Muslim population was respectively 37.15 % (average 24.54 %) 29.55 % (average 23.95 %), and 29.11 % (average 24.82 %). For India as a whole, the figure is 30.59 % (average 24.7 %). Source: Census of India, 1981.

this view and these are then used as a base for politicising the issue by parties such as BJP or Shiv-Sena who speak from a Hindu platform.<sup>11</sup>

## Measures for Population Control

The data with respect to Family-Planning measures suggested by MLAs is presented in table XII.2 below. Some of the Ns may be small but still instructive:

**Table XII.2**  
**Views on Types of Measures**  
**required for Effective Family Planning**

| PARTY         | Need Stricter Measures |     | Strong Disincentives |     | Compulsory Sterilisation |     | Education |     | Single Civil Code |     |
|---------------|------------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------------|-----|
|               | No.                    | %   | No.                  | %   | No.                      | %   | No.       | %   | No.               | %   |
| Haryana       | 3                      | 20% | 8                    | 53% | 1                        | 7%  | 7         | 47% | 2                 | 13% |
| Maharashtra   | 8                      | 19% | 22                   | 52% | 17                       | 40% | 9         | 21% | 5                 | 12% |
| Tamilnadu     | 6                      | 16% | 6                    | 16% | 3                        | 8%  | 18        | 47% |                   | 0%  |
| West Bengal   | 13                     | 29% | 6                    | 13% | 1                        | 2%  | 10        | 22% |                   | 0%  |
| Uttar Pradesh | 20                     | 30% | 16                   | 24% | 7                        | 10% | 22        | 33% | 10                | 15% |
| Total         | 50                     | 24% | 58                   | 28% | 29                       | 14% | 66        | 32% | 17                | 8%  |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response

In Haryana, the maximum proportion of MLAs (53%) suggested that “Strong disincentives” should be introduced in the form of loss of promotion in government jobs, reduction in ration card quotas, extra taxes etc. The second highest proportion from Haryana (47%) said that “Education” was the measure required. This, together with Tamilnadu, presents the highest response from among our states. One-quarter recommended “Stricter measures”. The emphasis on education is striking in a rural/agricultural state.

<sup>11</sup> Harish C Srivastava, ‘A Study of Fertility Differentials Among Hindu and Muslim Women in Bhiwandi’ in K Srinivasan & S Mukerji (Eds.) *Dynamics of Population and Family Welfare* op.cit. Srivastava quotes several studies which indicate that Muslim women have higher fertility rates as compared to Hindu women. His own limited study establishes the same trend. Religion is viewed as the main variable since even within same age, income, and occupation-groups the Muslim women had more children.

In Maharashtra too, the highest proportion (52%) favoured “Strong disincentives”, but the next highest (40%) said that “Compulsory sterilisation” should be introduced for couples who had two or three children. In this respect the Maharashtra MLAs were different from all other states, as the next highest proportion of MLAs suggesting “Compulsory sterilisation” was a much lower 14% in Uttar Pradesh - a variance of 26%. A further 29% of Maharashtra MLAs stated that “Stricter measures” were certainly required but not compulsory sterilisation. By combining the last two we found that a majority (69%) of MLAs in Maharashtra favoured a much stricter policy implementation than the present policies of the government. This finding is supported by Maneesha Tikekar’s interviews with Scheduled Caste legislators of Maharashtra: she reported that 94% of SC MLAs showed great enthusiasm in supporting compulsory family-planning.<sup>12</sup> This is a surprise considering that it was enforced sterilisations alleged to be carried out under the instructions of Sanjay Gandhi during the 1975-77 Emergency, which inflicted on Cong.I its worst electoral defeat ever. The sentiment in north India was so charged that even Mrs Indira Gandhi lost her seat. However, that experience in the northern states does not appear to have particularly influenced the views of Cong.I MLAs in Maharashtra.

A feature that Maharashtra shared only with Uttar Pradesh was that 12% of its MLAs stated that India needed a civil code that was common for all religions, because otherwise only the Hindus were asked to have smaller families. One would normally expect such a response to come from the ranks of BJP or the Shiv-Sena, political parties who have often taken this formal stand in relation to the Muslim community, but that was not so. Only 60% of this response was from the two parties mentioned

---

<sup>12</sup> Maneesha A Tikekar, *Scheduled Caste Legislators in Maharashtra* op. cit.



above and the balance of 40% came from members of the ruling party namely, Cong.I.

In Tamilnadu, the highest proportion (47%) suggested that “Education” was the measure that would help combat the problem of over-population. The next highest proportion stated that “Stricter measures” were now required to deal with this problem. The emphasis on education certainly reflects a more enlightened approach. It may well be related to the fact that Tamilnadu’s decennial growth rate of population (1981-91) at 14.94% is the least, and its level of literacy at 54.60% the highest, of our five states.<sup>13</sup> To some extent this is a trait shared by the Southern states. Kerala, Tamilnadu’s neighbouring state, has the lowest decadal growth rate at 14.06%. The correlation with education may be judged by the fact that Kerala, at 78% of its population, is also India’s most literate state.<sup>14</sup>

Of the West Bengal MLAs, given that the state had the lowest proportion of MLAs who agreed that there was an over-population problem in India, we did not expect that the highest proportion (29%) would favour “Stricter measures”. This was followed by “Education” (22%).

In Uttar Pradesh, 39% said that “Stricter measures” were required, 33% favoured “Education”, 24% “Strong disincentives” and only 10% “Compulsory sterilisation”. During the Emergency (1975-77) it was the North Indian states, particularly Uttar

---

<sup>13</sup> The decennial growth rate of population (percent) 1981-1991 for our five states is as follows: Haryana 26.27, Maharashtra 25.43, Uttar Pradesh 25.41, West Bengal 24.55, and Tamilnadu 14.94. On an All-India basis, Tamilnadu is second only to Kerala’s 14.06. Tamilnadu also leads in the proportion of literates in its population at 54.60. The percentage of literates in other states is: Maharashtra 54.52, West Bengal 48.12, Haryana 45.54, and Uttar Pradesh 33.83. (Source: Census of India 1991, Provisional figures)

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

Pradesh, that experienced the aggressive and non-voluntary sterilisation drive initiated by Sanjay Gandhi, Mrs Gandhi's son and at that time heir apparent. Scars of that policy were still visible. A special feature of the Uttar Pradesh legislators, where the ruling party was BJP (1992), was that 15 % of them said that India needed a "Single civil code" generally arguing, without supporting their argument with any specific facts, that the Hindus were the only ones attempting family planning while other religions, particularly Islam, promoted contrary values. Of this group, 80% were members of the BJP.

For all the states together, we found that a majority of MLAs favoured stricter measures to control population. This found expression in "Stricter measures", "Strong disincentives", and finally "Compulsory sterilisation". The combined proportion under these three responses adds up to 73 %. The other significant point is that one-third (32 %) of the MLAs suggested "Education" as a means to combat the problem which indicates a more enlightened and a more stable approach. However, the highest proportions favouring "Education" came from Tamilnadu, and, counter-intuitively from Haryana, but not from the more formally educated legislators of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra or West Bengal. One may relate this to the lower rate of population growth in Tamilnadu. The legislators of West Bengal had a generally low-key response to this question, with one-third of them offering no comment.

Table XII.3 below identifies the state with the highest proportion of its MLAs' support for each of the measures listed:

**Table XII.3**  
Specific highest  
emphasis of the five States

| Measure stated by highest number | State               | Percent State MLAs | Percent MLAs from all States | Variance between col. 3 and col.4 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Education                     | Haryana & Tamilnadu | 47%                | 32%                          | 15%                               |
| 2. Strong Disincentives          | Haryana*            | 53%                | 28%                          | 25%                               |
| 3. Strict Measures               | Uttar Pradesh       | 30%                | 24%                          | 6%                                |
| 4. Compulsory Sterilisation      | Maharashtra         | 40%                | 14%                          | 26%                               |
| 5. Single Civil Code             | Uttar Pradesh       | 15%                | 8%                           | 7%                                |

Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response

\*Maharashtra was a close second at 52%

There is a relatively high emphasis on “Education” in Haryana and Tamilnadu, and a surprisingly high proportion in favour of “Compulsory sterilisation” in Maharashtra; and, overall, a general feeling that stricter ways of controlling population were necessary.

#### Perception of Over-population (Party-wise)

The party-wise response is shown in table XII.4 below:

**Table XII.4**  
Views of MLAs on the Population problem  
(Party-wise)

| PARTY      | Is India Over-populated? |     |    |     | Is it a critical problem? |            |            |
|------------|--------------------------|-----|----|-----|---------------------------|------------|------------|
|            | Yes                      | %   | No | %   | Yes                       | % of col.2 | % of Total |
| Cong.I     | 48                       | 92% | 4  | 8%  | 43                        | 90%        | 83%        |
| CPI(M)     | 19                       | 58% | 14 | 42% | 9                         | 47%        | 27%        |
| BJP        | 31                       | 79% | 8  | 21% | 28                        | 90%        | 72%        |
| DMK        | 17                       | 89% | 2  | 11% | 13                        | 76%        | 68%        |
| Janata Dal | 30                       | 81% | 7  | 19% | 27                        | 90%        | 73%        |
| Total      | 145                      | 81% | 35 | 19% | 120                       | 83%        | 67%        |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

With the exception of CPI(M), we observe a generally overwhelming response, ranging between Cong.I's 92 % and BJP's 79 %, that India is over-populated. We also asked those MLAs who agreed whether they thought that this problem was critical for India: 90% said "yes". Of the total sample of legislators from Cong.I, these MLAs accounted for 83 %. From the CPI(M) 27% agreed that over-population was a critical problem and this proportion was 47% of the MLAs who responded affirmatively to the first question. For the BJP, the figures were 72% and 90%, in DMK, 68% and 76%, and in Janata Dal 73% and 90%.

Overall, from the five parties, 67% said that the problem was critical for India, representing 83% of the MLAs who had responded that India had a population problem. This response pattern from the five parties is in line with the response of the entire sample as in table XII.1. Our data indicate that when over-population was perceived as a problem, it was generally expressed with high intensity.

#### **Measures for Population Control (Party-wise)**

The party-wise data in this respect are presented in table XII.5 below:

**Table XII.5**  
**Views on Type of Measures**  
**required for Effective Family Planning?**  
**(Party-wise)**

| PARTY      | Need Stricter Measures |     | Strong Disincentives |     | Compulsory Sterilisation |     | Education |     | Single Civil Code |     |
|------------|------------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------------|-----|
|            | No.                    | %   | No.                  | %   | No.                      | %   | No.       | %   | No.               | %   |
| Cong.I     | 11                     | 21% | 23                   | 44% | 15                       | 29% | 18        | 35% | 4                 | 8%  |
| CPI(M)     | 5                      | 15% | 3                    | 9%  | 1                        | 3%  | 5         | 15% |                   | 0%  |
| BJP        | 10                     | 26% | 13                   | 33% | 4                        | 10% | 10        | 26% | 11                | 28% |
| DMK        | 4                      | 21% | 3                    | 16% | 1                        | 5%  | 9         | 47% |                   | 0%  |
| Janata Dal | 12                     | 32% | 9                    | 24% | 3                        | 8%  | 17        | 46% |                   | 0%  |
| Total      | 42                     | 23% | 51                   | 28% | 24                       | 13% | 59        | 33% | 15                | 8%  |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response

From Cong.I, the maximum proportion of MLAs (44%) suggested that “Strong disincentives” should be introduced. The second highest proportion (35%) recommended “Education”. The surprise is that the third highest proportion (29%) recommended “Compulsory sterilisation”, which is an extreme measure not generally associated with the middle-of-the-road culture of the Cong.I and particularly because of the compulsory sterilisation related post-Emergency (1977) electoral reverses of Cong.I. One-fifth (21%) of the Cong.I MLAs stated “Stricter measures” but fell short of compulsory sterilisation.

From the ranks of CPI(M) there was a generally mild response in keeping with the comparatively smaller proportion of MLAs who stated that over-population was a problem at all. The highest proportions, accounting for just 15% each of the CPI(M) MLAs, favoured “Stricter measures”, and “Education”. “Strong disincentives” found favour with only 9% of the CPI(M) MLAs and those who favoured “Compulsory sterilisation” were just 3% of the sample.

In the BJP, the highest proportion (33%) suggested that “Strong disincentives” were needed to help combat the problem of over-population. The next highest proportion was a significant 28% which said that India required a “Single civil code”, *because there were communities that did not care about family planning and all regulations were only directed at the Hindus*.<sup>15</sup> The reference, directly or indirectly, was to the Muslim community. BJP is unique in this because the only other party where a marginal proportion of MLAs (8%) pointed towards a “Single civil code” was Cong.I. Not a single MLA from any other party mentioned this as a recommended measure. “Stricter measures” and “Education” found favour with 26% each of the BJP MLAs, and only a small 10% favoured “Compulsory sterilisation”.

Of the DMK MLAs, the highest proportion (47%) favoured “Education”. DMK led all the other parties in supporting this measure. (but paradoxically, in reference to our question on critical problems facing India, education was not identified by many DMK MLAs as a problem of critical consequences for India - Chapter XI). The next highest was “Strict measures” stated by 21%. For “Compulsory sterilisation” there was a small 5% support.

In Janata Dal the same pattern, as in the case of DMK, was seen with 46% stating that “Education” was the measure required. The next highest proportion (32%) favoured “Strict measures”. 24% said that “Strong disincentives” were needed and only a small 8% favoured “Compulsory sterilisation”.

Table XII.6 below identifies the respective party which led in recommending each of the listed measures for population control:

---

<sup>15</sup> This was a phrase that we generally heard when a legislator identified this measure.

**Table XII.6**  
**Specific highest emphasis**  
**of the five political parties**

| Measure stated by highest proportion | Party      | Percent party MLAs | Percent MLAs from the five parties | Variance between col.3 and col.4 |
|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Education                         | DMK*       | 47 %               | 33 %                               | 14 %                             |
| 2. Strong disincentives              | Cong.I     | 44 %               | 28 %                               | 16 %                             |
| 3. Strict measures                   | Janata Dal | 32 %               | 23 %                               | 9 %                              |
| 4. Compulsory sterilisation          | Cong.I     | 29 %               | 13 %                               | 16 %                             |
| 5. Single Civil Code                 | BJP        | 28 %               | 8 %                                | 20 %                             |

N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

\*Note: Janata Dal was a close second with 46 %

BJP leads all others by 20% on “Single civil code”, Cong.I leads others by 16% each on both “Compulsory sterilisation” and “Strong disincentives”, DMK leads others on “Education” by 14% and Janata Dal leads others on “Stricter measures” by 9%.

We also present in table XII.7 below the parties from which we got the lowest response for each of the listed measures for population control:

**Table XII.7**  
**Specific lowest emphasis**  
**of the five political parties**

| Measure stated by Lowest proportion | Party                     | Percent Party MLAs | Percent MLAs from the five parties | Variance between col.3 and col.4 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Education                        | CPI(M)                    | 15 %               | 33 %                               | -18 %                            |
| 2. Strong disincentives             | CPI(M)                    | 9 %                | 28 %                               | -19 %                            |
| 3. Strict measures                  | CPI(M)                    | 15 %               | 23 %                               | -8 %                             |
| 4. Compulsory sterilisation         | CPI(M)                    | 3 %                | 13 %                               | -10 %                            |
| 5. Single Civil Code                | CPI(M)/DMK/<br>Janata Dal | 0 %                | 8 %                                | -8 %                             |

Note: N = Cong.I 52, CPI(M) 33, BJP 39, DMK 19, Janata Dal 37, and Total 180.

Further to our discussion in the previous chapter, this table brings out even more clearly the general lack of sympathy for this whole issue of population control in CPI(M). It is vividly illustrated by the following comments of a CPI(M) MLA,  
*“Children are a Blessing, not a Curse”*

## REASONS FOR THE PERSISTENCE OF POVERTY IN INDIA

Linked to the unabated increase in India's population is the question of its stubborn and persistent poverty. It is widely acknowledged that in the context of Indian countryside poverty takes on a whole new meaning. E P W da Costa, for example, divides the lowest economic strata into *poor*, *destitute* and *severely destitute* based on their monthly per capita expenditure.<sup>16</sup> The last category, as the definition suggests, barely manages to survive. Figures based on NSS data suggest that in 1982-83, based on current prices, one-third of rural population was below an average expenditure level of Rs. 2.50 per person per day (less than US\$ 0.10 cents).<sup>17</sup> One cannot visit the countryside without getting a feeling of widespread deprivation. Bhattacharya et al. note that the bottom 40% of India's population has remained chronically poor.<sup>18</sup> Even recent estimates of rural poverty place 45% of rural population below the poverty line in 1987-88.<sup>19</sup> The urban and metropolitan areas also have pockets of severe hardship.

Obviously there cannot be a simple mono-causal (or even multi-causal) explanation for the persistence of poverty in India. But, without going into the complexities of the continuance of poverty in India, we investigated the views of our sample by asking relatively two simple questions. First, what they thought were the main reasons for

---

<sup>16</sup> E P W da Costa, 'A Portrait of Indian Poverty', in A J Fonseca (Ed.), *Challenge of Poverty in India* (Delhi: Vikas, 1971). pp.48-59

<sup>17</sup> N Bhattacharya, D Coondoo, Pradip Maiti and Robin Mukerjee, *Poverty, Inequality and Prices in Rural India* (New Delhi, 1991) p.211.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185

<sup>19</sup> Studies done by L R Jain and S Tendulkar place 45% of rural and 37% of the urban population below the poverty line in 1987-88. The official figures are 33% and 20% respectively. Cited in *India Today*, 15 Dec., 1992. p. 125



the persistence of poverty in India despite 45 years of developmental policies? This was a multiple choice question but the response was not restricted to our suggestions. The MLAs usually responded within our categories except a token response in Uttar Pradesh who added “Corruption” to our other three categories of “Wrong policies of the government”,<sup>20</sup> “Poor policy implementation”, and “Size of problem too big”. The second question related to their views on which sector they thought should lead the effort to eradicate poverty. This was an open ended question and they were free to express their views without the constraint of any predetermined categories.

The purpose of this enquiry on poverty, considering that the MLAs regularly encounter poor and destitute constituents, was to establish their *feel* for the issue and to find out if they had any particular bias in advocating the broad sector that India should concentrate on in its efforts to reduce poverty.

The response of the legislators to our first question is listed below in table XII.8.

---

<sup>20</sup> We explained to them that this related to policies on both production and distributional aspects of economic planning.

**Table XII.8**  
**Main Reason for persistence**  
**of Poverty in India**

| REASON                      | Haryana   |            | Maharashtra |            | Tamilnadu |            | West Bengal |            | Uttar Pradesh |            | Total      |            |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                             | No.       | %          | No.         | %          | No.       | %          | No.         | %          | No.           | %          | No.        | %          |
| Wrong Policies by the Govt. | 9         | 60%        | 18          | 43%        | 19        | 50%        | 34          | 76%        | 43            | 64%        | 123        | 59%        |
| Poor Policy Implementation  | 4         | 27%        | 13          | 31%        | 12        | 32%        | 7           | 16%        | 12            | 18%        | 48         | 23%        |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>            | <b>13</b> | <b>87%</b> | <b>31</b>   | <b>74%</b> | <b>31</b> | <b>82%</b> | <b>41</b>   | <b>92%</b> | <b>55</b>     | <b>82%</b> | <b>171</b> | <b>82%</b> |
| Size of Problem Too Big     | 0         | 0%         | 10          | 24%        | 6         | 16%        | 2           | 4%         | 5             | 7%         | 23         | 11%        |
| Corruption                  |           |            |             |            |           |            |             |            | 2             | 3%         | 2          | 1%         |
| No Comment                  |           | 0%         | 1           | 2%         |           | 0%         |             | 0%         |               | 0%         | 1          | 0%         |
| Other                       | 2         | 13%        | 0           | 0%         | 1         | 3%         | 2           | 4%         | 5             | 7%         | 10         | 5%         |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, the highest proportion of legislators (60%) responded that the main reason was “Wrong Policies” by the central government. The next highest (27%), which was far behind, stated that the policies were not necessarily wrong but these were “Poorly implemented.” Adding these two responses gives us an overwhelming proportion of 87% MLAs who blamed the Central government directly.

The same pattern of response followed in all the other states. The proportion of MLAs in Maharashtra who responded “Wrong Policies” was 43%, and those who said “Poor implementation” was 31%. At 74% this combined response was the lowest among all states, presumably because the ruling party in Maharashtra was Cong.I whose response as we shall see below was diluted in this respect. In Tamilnadu these figures were 50% and 32% adding upto 82%; in West Bengal, 76% and 16% (92%); and in Uttar Pradesh, 64% and 18% (82%). A significant proportion, 24% in Maharashtra and a lower 16% in Tamilnadu, responded that the policies and their

implementation were not particularly to blame, the size of the problem itself was just “too big”. Overall, most felt that the policies of the government had been poorly conceived (59%) and poorly implemented (23%). Together the two added up to 83%.

### Reasons for Persistence of Poverty in India (Party-wise)

The Party-wise response of the legislators is listed in table XII.9 below:

**Table XII.9**  
**What is the main reason**  
**for the persistence of poverty in India?**  
**(Party-wise)**

| Main Reason                 | Cong.I    |            | CPI(M)    |            | BJP       |            | DMK       |            | Janata Dal |            | Total      |            |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                             | No.       | %          | No.       | %          | No.       | %          | No.       | %          | No.        | %          | No.        | %          |
| Wrong Policies by the Govt. | 9         | 17%        | 30        | 91%        | 29        | 74%        | 13        | 68%        | 28         | 76%        | 109        | 61%        |
| Poor Policy Implementation  | 23        | 44%        | 2         | 6%         | 3         | 8%         | 4         | 21%        | 8          | 22%        | 40         | 22%        |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>            | <b>32</b> | <b>61%</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>97%</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>82%</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>89%</b> | <b>36</b>  | <b>98%</b> | <b>149</b> | <b>83%</b> |
| Size of Problem Too Big     | 16        | 31%        | 0         | 0%         | 5         | 13%        | 1         | 5%         | 0          | 0%         | 22         | 12%        |
| Corruption                  | 1         | 2%         | 1         | 3%         | 0         | 0%         | 0         | 0%         | 1          | 3%         | 3          | 2%         |
| No Comment                  | 1         | 2%         | 0         | 0%         | 0         | 0%         | 0         | 0%         | 0          | 0%         | 1          | 1%         |
| Other                       | 2         | 4%         | 0         | 0%         | 2         | 5%         | 1         | 5%         | 0          | 0%         | 5          | 3%         |

Note: N = Cong.I 52, CPI(M) 33, BJP 39, DMK 19, Janata Dal 37, and Total 180.

From Cong.I, the highest proportion of legislators (44%) responded that the main reason was “Poor implementation of governmental policies”. The next highest (31%) stated that the size of the problem was “Too big”, suggesting that there was a sense of responsibility for having done poorly on this front and that reasons were being found to justify this poor performance. Considering that the Congress party had ruled at the centre for most of India’s post-Independence history, a significant 17% from Cong.I said that the policies of the government had been “Wrong”. Adding the first

two responses illustrates that 61 % of Cong.I MLAs placed the blame on their own government, but this was the lowest proportion from among the five parties.

The MLAs of CPI(M) overwhelmingly (91 %) stated that the policies of the Central government had been wrong. The addition of “Poor implementation” takes this proportion to a near total 97%. In all the other parties the same trend was followed. The proportion of MLAs in BJP who responded “Wrong policies” was 74 % and combined with “Poor implementation” the figure was 82 %, in DMK 68 % and 89 %, and in Janata Dal 76 % and 98 %.

The view that government policies were blameless but the implementation poor came mainly from Cong.I (44 %); among the other parties DMK and Janata responded 21 % and 22 % respectively - roughly one half of the Cong.I response. Only 17 % of Cong.I MLAs responded “Wrong policies”. This can be contrasted with CPI(M) 91 %; BJP 74 %; DMK 68 %; and Janata Dal 76 %. The response that the size of the problem was too big also came primarily from the Cong.I MLAs, indicating that there was perhaps a sense of responsibility for having performed poorly on this front and that reasons were being found to justify this poor performance.

#### **WHICH SECTOR SHOULD INDIA CONCENTRATE ON TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT AND ALLEVIATE POVERTY**

Linked to the question of persistent poverty was our next question requiring the MLAs to identify the sector/s which they felt needed the attention of the development planners in order to accelerate development and alleviate poverty. We know that almost one-third of our sample were agriculturists (Chapter III). Their response to

this question further helps us to determine their orientation. This again was a multiple-choice question, but we permitted them the leeway to answer in a way which would reflect their own considered view. The response is presented in table XII.10 below:

**Table XII.10**  
**Suggested Sectors for**  
**combating Poverty and Under-development**

| Suggested Sector             | Haryana |     | Maharashtra |     | Tamilnadu |     | West Bengal |     | Uttar Pradesh |     | Total |     |
|------------------------------|---------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                              | No.     | %   | No.         | %   | No.       | %   | No.         | %   | No.           | %   | No.   | %   |
| Mainly Agriculture           | 3       | 20% | 15          | 36% | 5         | 13% | 14          | 31% | 28            | 42% | 65    | 31% |
| Agri-based Industry          | 2       | 13% | 18          | 43% |           | 0%  | 3           | 7%  | 4             | 6%  | 27    | 13% |
| Both Agri.& Industry         | 7       | 47% | 14          | 33% | 26        | 68% | 18          | 40% | 16            | 24% | 81    | 39% |
| Mainly Industry              | 4       | 27% | 6           | 14% | 6         | 16% | 2           | 4%  | 2             | 3%  | 20    | 10% |
| Small Scale Industry         | 1       | 7%  | 3           | 7%  |           | 0%  | 2           | 4%  | 5             | 7%  | 11    | 5%  |
| Small-Alternative Technology | 1       | 7%  | 3           | 7%  | 2         | 5%  |             | 0%  |               | 0%  | 6     | 3%  |
| Cottage Industry             | 1       | 7%  | 2           | 5%  | 1         | 3%  | 2           | 4%  | 17            | 25% | 23    | 11% |
| Education                    | 10      | 67% | 7           | 17% | 16        | 42% | 15          | 33% | 18            | 27% | 66    | 32% |
| Land Reforms                 |         | 0%  |             | 0%  |           | 0%  | 15          | 33% | 1             | 1%  | 16    | 8%  |
| Remove Corruption            | 2       | 13% | 3           | 7%  | 2         | 5%  | 1           | 2%  | 3             | 4%  | 11    | 5%  |
| Change Political System      |         | 0%  |             | 0%  |           | 0%  | 1           | 2%  | 3             | 4%  | 4     | 2%  |
| Other                        | 2       | 13% | 3           | 7%  | 2         | 5%  | 2           | 4%  | 17            | 25% | 26    | 12% |
| No Comment                   | 1       | 7%  | 2           | 5%  |           | 0%  |             | 0%  |               | 0%  | 3     | 1%  |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response

The highest proportion in Haryana (67%) said that India needed to concentrate on “Education” for rapid economic development. This is by far the highest proportion of MLAs from any state. We have seen this strain in Haryana throughout. To the question on types of measures required for family planning, almost one-half of Haryana legislators had responded “Education” (table XII.2). This consistent response, coming from a state like Haryana, is quite contrary to the general impression among urban elites in India that Haryana’s politicians are rustic. For the

second rank, 47% of the MLAs in Haryana stated that the government should concentrate on “Both Agriculture and Industries”. There was no overwhelming preference in their minds for any of these two broad sectors - again a surprise in this primarily agricultural state with active agrarian politics. The next rank (27%) went to “Mainly Industries”. One-fifth identified “Mainly Agriculture”.

In Maharashtra, the general emphasis was on agriculture. Two-fifths pointed out that India needed to concentrate on “Agriculture-based Industries”. This was closely followed by 36%, who responded “Mainly Agriculture”. One-third stated that “Both Agriculture and Industry” were important and only 14% identified “Mainly Industry”. We also observed a comparatively poor response for “Education”, which was mentioned by only 17%.

In Tamilnadu, again the largest proportion showed no preference for either agriculture or industry: an impressive 68% responded in favour of “Both Agriculture and Industry”. The second highest proportion, 42%, responded that “Education” was the sector to concentrate on. In this case too, this has been a consistent leaning of MLAs from Tamilnadu. As in Haryana, almost one-half of Tamilnadu’s MLAs had identified “Education” in response to the question above on the types of measures required for family planning in India. A relatively low 13% said that India should concentrate on “Mainly Agriculture”.

West Bengal followed Tamilnadu as most MLAs (40%) responded that “Both Agriculture and Industry” should receive attention. But a unique feature of the

response in West Bengal was that one-third of the MLAs pointed to “Land reforms” as the crucial factor for future development and the alleviation of poverty. They were almost alone among the five states in including land reforms in their response. This response is consistent with the lead provided by West Bengal in attempting land reform in India. It is quite widely accepted that CPI(M) in West Bengal owes its strength to a more effective implementation of land reforms when compared to other parties in other states of India, especially those states which have been mainly governed by Cong.I in post-independence India.<sup>21</sup> One-third of the MLAs from West Bengal stated that “Education” was the sector that needed attention.

In Uttar Pradesh, the largest proportion (42%) among our sample states responded “Mainly Agriculture”. The second rank (27%) went to “Education” and 24% favoured “Both Agriculture and Industry”. Unique to Uttar Pradesh was a 25% response for “Cottage Industry”. This latter is associated with the rural work-force and appears to signify the rural orientation - and UP is 80% rural - of UP MLAs.

Overall, for all our states we fail to find a clear orientation towards agriculture: only 31% responded “Mainly Agriculture” and another 13% pointed to “Agri-based Industry”. On the other hand, the highest proportion of MLAs (39%) favoured “Both Agriculture and Industry” indicating that the importance of industrialisation is being recognised even among rural-oriented politicians. The one major surprise is the

---

<sup>21</sup> See Atul Kohli, *The State and Poverty in India* op. cit.; T J Nossiter, *Marxist State Governments in India* op. cit. Nossiter notes that CPI(M)’s land reforms have been generally poor. Of the land distributed by the end of 1982, 55% went to SC/ST persons, p. 140. Also see Chapter III.

awareness of “Education” among the Haryana MLAs and the relative lack of awareness among Maharashtra MLAs. We note the unique affiliation for “Land Reforms” among the West Bengal legislators and for “Cottage Industries” among the Uttar Pradesh MLAs.

Table XII.11 below shows the highest and lowest response for the major sectors as identified by the MLAs in our sample:

**Table XII.11**  
**Highest and Lowest**  
**support for suggested sectors**  
**in combating poverty and underdevelopment**

| <b>Suggested Sector</b> | <b>State with highest response</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>State with lowest response</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Variance Highest/Lowest</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Mainly Agriculture   | Uttar Pradesh                      | 42%      | Tamilnadu                         | 13%      | 29%                            |
| 2. Mainly Industry      | Haryana                            | 27%      | Uttar Pradesh                     | 3%       | 24%                            |
| 3. Both Agri & Industry | Tamilnadu                          | 68%      | Uttar Pradesh                     | 24%      | 44%                            |
| 4. Agri-based Industry  | Maharashtra                        | 43%      | Tamilnadu                         | 0%       | 43%                            |
| 5. Cottage Industry     | Uttar Pradesh                      | 25%      | Tamilnadu                         | 3%       | 22%                            |
| 6. Education            | Haryana                            | 67%      | Maharashtra                       | 17%      | 50%                            |
| 7. Land Reforms         | West Bengal                        | 33%      | Maharashtra<br>Haryana/Tamilnadu  | 0%       | 33%                            |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

We clearly observe the agricultural orientation of Uttar Pradesh, an unexpected emphasis on education in Haryana and the unique emphasis on land reforms in West Bengal. The last among these is a manifestation of the CPI(M) culture and policy (see Chapter III).



## Which Sector should India Concentrate on to Promote Development and Alleviate Poverty (party-wise)

The party-wise response is presented in table XII.12 below:

**Table XII.12**  
**Suggested sectors for**  
**combating Poverty and Under-Development**  
**(Party-wise)**

| Suggested Sector     | Cong.I |     | CPI(M) |     | BJP |     | DMK |     | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|----------------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                      | No.    | %   | No.    | %   | No. | %   | No. | %   | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| Mainly Agriculture   | 12     | 23% | 13     | 39% | 13  | 33% | 2   | 11% | 16         | 43% | 56    | 31% |
| Agri-based Industry  | 11     | 21% | 3      | 9%  | 7   | 18% | 0   | 0%  | 10         | 11% | 25    | 14% |
| Both Agri.& Industry | 24     | 46% | 13     | 39% | 14  | 36% | 12  | 63% | 4          | 27% | 73    | 41% |
| Mainly Industry      | 10     | 19% |        | 0%  | 1   | 3%  | 3   | 16% | 2          | 5%  | 16    | 9%  |
| Cottage Industry     | 5      | 10% | 1      | 3%  | 7   | 18% | 1   | 5%  | 7          | 19% | 21    | 12% |
| Education            | 15     | 29% | 8      | 24% | 12  | 31% | 10  | 53% | 9          | 24% | 54    | 30% |
| Land Reforms         |        |     | 13     | 39% |     |     |     |     | 1          | 3%  | 14    | 8%  |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and TOTAL 180.  
Totals exceed 100% due to multiple response

The majority of opinion in Cong.I did not favour agriculture nor industry on its own.

The majority (46%) felt that “Both Agriculture and Industry” were important for India’s development. The next highest proportion of 29%, stated that the main sector for combating poverty and underdevelopment was “Education”. Those MLAs who said that India should concentrate mainly on “Agriculture” were the third highest at 23% and a low fourth position was occupied by legislators who stated that “Agri-based Industries” (11%) were the answer. It is clear that the majority view in Cong.I favoured the agricultural sector in general but paradoxically no one talked of “Land Reforms”

The opinion in CPI(M) was much more focused on agriculture. It was equally split between three sectors, each identified by two-fifths of its MLAs. The first group, in line with Cong.I, stated that India needed to concentrate on “Both Agriculture and Industry”; the second responded “Land Reforms”, and the third, “Agri-based industries”. So far as land reforms were concerned, CPI(M) not only demonstrated a high proportion who emphasised land reform, it was also unique in discussing this particular measure. Except for one MLA in Janata Dal, no MLAs from any of the other four parties mentioned Land Reforms. CPI(M) was also surprisingly unique in that not even a single MLA thought that India should concentrate mainly on “Industries”. Clearly the orientation of the CPI(M) MLAs was highly agricultural. We may, in part, relate this information to the fact that 52 % of CPI(M) legislators, the highest among the five parties, had rural residences (see Chapter III).

In BJP too, we observe a three-way split, although with a different emphasis as compared to CPI(M). The largest (36 %) response was in favour of “Both Agriculture and Industry”. The second highest proportion (33 %) stated that India needed to concentrate mainly on “Agriculture”. The third (31 %) said that “Education” was the sector to concentrate on. A marginal 3 % stated that India should concentrate mainly on “Industry”.

In the case of DMK, while we again observed a large majority (63 %) responding “Both Agriculture and Industry”, the second largest at 53 % - the highest proportion from among all the parties - was “Education”.

Janata Dal was the only party where a majority (43%) clearly favoured “Mainly Agriculture” as the sector that India should concentrate on. The next rank, some distance behind at 27%, was “Both Agriculture and Industry”. A significant 24% emphasised “Education”. The highest response favouring “Cottage Industries” (19%) also came from Janata Dal.

Table XII.13 below shows the highest and the lowest response for the major sectors as identified by the legislators from these parties.

**Table XII.13**  
**Highest and Lowest**  
**support for suggested sectors**  
**in combating poverty and underdevelopment**  
**(Party-wise)**

| <b>Suggested Sector</b> | <b>Party with Highest response</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Party with lowest response</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Variance Highest/Lowest</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Mainly Agriculture   | Janata Dal                         | 43%            | DMK                               | 11%            | 32%                            |
| 2. Mainly Industry      | Cong.I                             | 19%            | CPI(M)                            | 0%             | 19%                            |
| 3. Both Agri & Industry | DMK                                | 63%            | Janata Dal                        | 27%            | 36%                            |
| 4. Agri-based Industry  | Cong.I                             | 21%            | DMK                               | 0%             | 21%                            |
| 5. Cottage Industry     | Janata Dal                         | 19%            | CPI(M)                            | 3%             | 16%                            |
| 6. Education            | DMK                                | 53%            | Janata Dal/CPI(M)                 | 24%            | 29%                            |
| 7. Land Reforms         | CPI(M)                             | 39%            | Cong.I/BJP/DMK                    | 0%             | 39%                            |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

Overall, for all our political parties there is one significant factor, the lack of identification of “Land Reforms” among *all* the parties in our sample other than CPI(M). The other notable points were a generally high support for “Education” and a general lack of enthusiasm for “Cottage Industries” except Janata Dal. Clearly, even within Cong.I, the major thrust of Mahatma Gandhi’s thinking is now lost.

### **XIII. PERCEPTION OF CORRUPTION IN POLITICS**

In the 1960s, several scholars not only played down the negative influence of corruption, but many of them talked of the positive effects of corruption, particularly in the developing world. One scholar went to the extent of suggesting that opportunity for corruption might actually serve to uplift the quality of public servants.<sup>1</sup> Even the distinguished Samuel Huntington took a relatively benign view of corruption in the developing world.<sup>2</sup>

However, corruption has been demonstrably shown to have the capacity to undermine the legitimacy of governments and institutions. In India, Rajiv Gandhi, who started his premiership in 1984 with the highest majority that any Indian Prime Minister ever secured, appeared to have lost the following election in 1989 mainly due to his perceived involvement in a corrupt arms deal with Bofors of Sweden. In fact, the opposition made this particular issue the major plank of their campaign in 1989.<sup>3</sup>

In India widespread corruption has led to a perception that jobs, transfers, educational qualifications, and even judicial judgements can be bought in one way or another. This perception, in turn, constructs reality by shaping expectations and behaviour. India has thus created a whole generation of public officials who extort money and favours either by not doing their job or, even worse, by creating bottlenecks for

---

<sup>1</sup> David H Bayley, 'The Effects of Corruption in a Developing Nation', *Western Political Quarterly* XIX, 4, (Dec.1966)

<sup>2</sup> *Political Order in Changing Societies*, op. cit., pp 59-71

<sup>3</sup> *India Today* reported that the opposition campaign strategy primarily concentrated on publicising Cong.I's and Rajiv Gandhi's corruption: "The spearhead of opposition offensive is thus the campaign against Rajiv's record of corruption". (15 Nov. 1989, p. 22).

people where there are none.<sup>4</sup> The regret is that even where officials are not corrupt they enjoy a low credibility leading to both poor decision-making and cynicism. Corruption, because it erodes performance, becomes one of the leading reasons for the loss of legitimacy for the government.

The origins of the corruption afflicting India are to be found in its political system, supplemented by the Nehruvian economic policy. On the one hand, politics operates in an environment where its politicians accumulate a political debt, which compromises their position even before they start their campaign (See Sources of Finance for Election, Chapter X). On the other, increasing government involvement in the economic sphere creates interest-group dynamics by placing control of vast resources in the hands of the politicians and bureaucrats. In a lax system with a low degree of accountability, the temptation to abuse this influence for party or personal gain is pervasive.

At state-level politics in India there are frequent charges of corruption. The oft quoted criminalisation of politics means that in many state assemblies criminals have been elected as members, and there are documented cases of MLAs being sought by the police on criminal charges. In a recent editorial, *The Indian Express* informs us that the numbers of criminals “muscling” their way into state legislatures is on the increase.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Among a host of literature, see Robert Wade, ‘Politics and Graft’ in Peter M Ward (Ed.), *Corruption, Development and Equality: Soft Touch or Hard Graft* (London: Routledge, 1989); G S Bhargava, *India’s Watergate: A study of Political Corruption in India* (New Delhi: Arnold Heimann, 1974); Vir Chopra, ‘The Imperative of Reform’ in Subash C Kashyap (Ed.) *Reforming the Constitution* (New Delhi: UPSPD, 1992)

<sup>5</sup> The editorial quotes police statistics to report that in Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly there were 35 MLAs with criminal records in 1984, 50 in 1989, and 133 (almost one-third of the House strength of 425) under the BJP rule in 1991-92. (Bombay, October 30, 1993). In a special report with reference to Bihar, *India Today* calls them *MLA Dons*. “With the dons calling all the shots, development activities are grinding to a halt. The funds meant for official schemes wind up in the

With this background, we asked the MLAs for their views on corruption in the form of three questions. First, whether they thought that politics in India had progressively become more corrupt; second, whether they expected the situation to improve or to deteriorate in the foreseeable future; and third, whom did they hold responsible for any such degeneration? For this last question, we suggested three categories, the “politicians”, the “bureaucrats”, or “both equally”, but we did not require them to limit their response to only our categories. This open-ended nature of the question resulted in two more categories: “the public” and “the system”. For example, some MLAs blamed the public, who they said had corrupted politicians and administration by participating in corrupt practices and by according social acceptance to corruption. There were others who blamed the system, the whole political and administrative structure which fostered and engendered corruption in its many forms. Their views are presented in tables XIII.1 and XIII.2 below:

---

coffers of the politicians who double as contractors” (January 31, 1992, pp. 37-41)

**Table XIII.1**  
**Views on Corruption**

| STATE         | Is politics more corrupt than before? |      |    |     |      |    | In foreseeable future, will the situation be better, worse or continue at the same level? |     |        |     |      |     |            |     |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|------|----|-----|------|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------|-----|------|-----|------------|-----|
|               | Yes                                   | %    | No | %   | Same | %  | Worse                                                                                     | %   | Better | %   | Same | %   | No Comment | %   |
| Haryana       | 15                                    | 100% | 0  | 0%  |      | 0% | 14                                                                                        | 93% | 1      | 7%  |      | 0%  |            | 0%  |
| Maharashtra   | 37                                    | 88%  | 5  | 12% |      | 0% | 29                                                                                        | 69% | 8      | 19% | 4    | 10% | 1          | 2%  |
| Tamilnadu     | 31                                    | 82%  | 6  | 16% | 1    | 3% | 24                                                                                        | 63% | 6      | 16% | 4    | 11% | 4          | 11% |
| West Bengal   | 35                                    | 78%  | 10 | 22% |      | 0% | 25                                                                                        | 56% | 11     | 24% |      | 0%  | 9          | 20% |
| Uttar Pradesh | 64                                    | 96%  | 3  | 4%  |      | 0% | 48                                                                                        | 72% | 16     | 24% |      | 0%  | 3          | 4%  |
| Total         | 182                                   | 88%  | 24 | 12% | 1    | 0% | 140                                                                                       | 68% | 42     | 20% | 8    | 4%  | 17         | 8%  |

In Uttar Pradesh 14 were simply 'hopeful' that corruption would go

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

**Table XIII.2**  
**(Views on Corruption...contd.)**  
**Who is mainly responsible**

| STATE         | Who do you believe is mainly responsible for this? |     |                 |     |              |     |            |     |            |     |            |     |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------|-----|--------------|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|
|               | The Politicians                                    |     | The Bureaucrats |     | Both Equally |     | The Public |     | The System |     | No Comment |     |
|               | No.                                                | %   | No.             | %   | No.          | %   | No.        | %   | No.        | %   | No.        | %   |
| Haryana       | 7                                                  | 47% |                 | 0%  | 5            | 33% |            | 0%  | 2          | 13% | 1          | 7%  |
| Maharashtra   | 13                                                 | 31% | 9               | 21% | 13           | 31% |            | 0%  | 4          | 10% | 3          | 7%  |
| Tamilnadu     | 7                                                  | 18% | 7               | 18% | 11           | 29% | 5          | 13% | 1          | 3%  | 7          | 18% |
| West Bengal   | 18                                                 | 40% |                 | 0%  | 5            | 11% | 2          | 4%  | 7          | 16% | 13         | 29% |
| Uttar Pradesh | 30                                                 | 45% | 4               | 6%  | 16           | 24% | 2          | 3%  | 8          | 12% | 7          | 10% |
| Total         | 75                                                 | 36% | 20              | 10% | 50           | 24% | 9          | 4%  | 22         | 11% | 31         | 15% |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, to the question whether politics was progressively getting corrupt, every single MLA answered in the affirmative. Without a doubt, they said, political culture had progressively degenerated in the post-independence history of India. To the question whether it would get any better or worse, an overwhelming 93% again stated that it would, in their opinion, get worse. This response from Haryana MLAs cut across party lines.

To the question as to whom they held responsible, most (47%) said “politicians” as a group. Nobody blamed the bureaucracy singly as the primary group, but 33% of the MLAs said that politicians and bureaucrats were equally responsible. This demonstrated that 80% of the MLAs held politicians directly or indirectly responsible for having contributed to the growth of corruption. A small proportion (13%) held “the system” responsible.

In Maharashtra, once again, an overwhelming majority (88%) held the view that politics had progressively become more corrupt in the last four decades, and a substantial 69% said that the situation was likely to worsen in the near future. One-fifth stated that the situation was likely to improve. Paradoxically, the reason for this optimism came out of their pessimism about the current situation; they felt that the people had reached the limits of their tolerance and that pressure from the masses will probably exert some influence to clean up political life. This response cut across party lines.

On the question of whom they held mainly responsible, 31% put the blame directly on the politicians, while 21% said that the bureaucracy was mainly responsible. A further 31% said that the politicians and the bureaucrats were equally responsible. This indicated that a high proportion (62%) of the MLAs placed direct or indirect responsibility on politicians as a group. On the other hand a significant proportion (52%) also pointed in the direction of the bureaucrats.

In Tamilnadu, those who said that politics today was more corrupt than before were again a huge majority (82%). Only 16% said that politics was not any more corrupt now than it was in the past. Concerning the outlook for the foreseeable future, 63% said that it was likely to be worse, while 16% felt that the situation might improve.



However, we found that whereas 94 % of the opposition said that politics today was more corrupt than before, from the ruling party a relatively lower 68 % endorsed this viewpoint. Therefore, the 16 % who said that politics had not become more corrupt were almost exclusively from the ruling party. A relatively smaller proportion of 18 % in Tamilnadu placed the blame for an increase in corruption on the politicians and an identical proportion blamed the bureaucrats. A relatively larger proportion (29 %) said that politicians and bureaucrats were both equally responsible. This demonstrates that almost one-half (47 %) of the sample laid the blame on both the politicians and the bureaucrats. 13 % said that the “system” was to blame and 11 % did not offer any comments on the issue, leaving us to read between the lines.

In West Bengal, 78 % of the sample endorsed the view that politics was becoming progressively more corrupt. Whereas 100 % of the opposition agreed, the proportion from the ruling left-front was also a high 72 %. About the future, there was comparatively more optimism in West Bengal, and 24 % of the MLAs felt that the situation might improve in the foreseeable future. But this opinion came mainly from the ruling left-front who constituted 91 % of this group. From among their own ranks, 28 % of the ruling left-front and 11 % of the opposition MLAs were of this opinion. Surprisingly, a high proportion (40 %) of West Bengal MLAs said that it was politicians as a group who were primarily responsible for this state of affairs. Not a single MLA placed the blame exclusively on the bureaucrats, although 11 % said that the blame went in equal proportion to both politicians and the bureaucrats. This indicated that, directly or indirectly, 51 % of the total attributed the problem to politicians. A high proportion (29 %), the highest among all states and almost exclusively from the ruling Left-front, offered no comments - a trait that we have observed in relation to several questions. CPI(M) legislators are extremely conscious

of what they say as they do not wish to be seen to harbour any views that are against the party's official line. 16% laid the blame on "the system".

In Uttar Pradesh, almost all the MLAs (96%) said that contemporary politics was more corrupt than before, and almost three-quarters (72%) felt that the situation was likely to worsen in the foreseeable future. A significant 24% stated that they expected the future to be better, but this opinion came substantially from the ruling BJP MLAs who formed 69% of this group. Of the ranks of BJP alone, 38% said so. However, this response was primarily based on a *hope* that the future might bring a better political culture or on the comment that the future will be less corrupt because BJP is likely to rule more states as well as the centre and because BJP is less corrupt - a sentiment not borne out by the actual experience of recent BJP governments in northern states.<sup>6</sup> On the question of who they felt was responsible for this progressive increase in corruption, 45% put the blame on "politicians" as a group. A further 24% said that the politicians and the bureaucrats were equally to blame. This means that 69% of the MLAs in Uttar Pradesh thought that, directly or indirectly, the problem was mainly intensified by the politicians.

For all the states together, we found that 88% of all the MLAs stated that politics had become progressively more corrupt and 68% thought that it was likely to worsen in the foreseeable future. Though 20% of the MLAs said that the situation was likely to improve in the future, they did not state any clear reason for this opinion. Mostly it was based on some *hope* or *optimism* without any substantive argument. By and large this opinion cut across party lines, except for the state of Tamilnadu where we

---

<sup>6</sup> See *India Today*, March 15, 1991, p.40, and April 15, 1991, pp. 74-77. It reports that while there may be no significant corruption charges against any of the BJP Chief Ministers, corruption at individual ministers' level is still alleged to be alive and "fund collection at centralised party level continues".

found some difference in the response of the ruling party MLAs as compared to the opposition.

Most MLAs directly blamed the “politicians” as a group for this state of affairs (36%) and a further 24% said that the politicians and the bureaucracy were equally to blame. This increased the proportion of MLAs who, directly or indirectly, laid the blame on the politicians to a high 60%. Considering that this response is from India’s state-level political elite, it gives an indication of how poorly politics is viewed by the politicians themselves, not to speak of the general public.

#### **Views on Corruption (Party-wise)**

The party-wise data are presented in tables XIII.3 and XIII.4 below:

**Table XIII.3**  
**Views on Corruption**  
**(Party-wise)**

| PARTY        | Is politics more corrupt than before? |            |           |            |          |           | In foreseeable future, will the situation be better, worse or continue at the same level? |            |           |            |          |           |            |           |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
|              | Yes                                   | %          | No        | %          | Same     | %         | Worse                                                                                     | %          | Better    | %          | Same     | %         | No Comment | %         |
| Cong.I       | 47                                    | 90%        | 4         | 8%         | 1        | 2%        | 38                                                                                        | 73%        | 9         | 17%        | 4        | 8%        | 1          | 2%        |
| CPI(M)       | 24                                    | 73%        | 9         | 27%        |          | 0%        | 16                                                                                        | 48%        | 9         | 27%        |          | 0%        | 8          | 24%       |
| BJP          | 36                                    | 92%        | 3         | 8%         |          | 0%        | 25                                                                                        | 64%        | 11        | 28%        | 1        | 3%        | 2          | 5%        |
| DMK          | 12                                    | 63%        | 6         | 32%        | 1        | 5%        | 8                                                                                         | 42%        | 4         | 21%        | 3        | 16%       | 4          | 21%       |
| Janata Dal   | 36                                    | 97%        | 1         | 3%         |          | 0%        | 31                                                                                        | 84%        | 5         | 14%        |          | 0%        | 1          | 3%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>155</b>                            | <b>86%</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>13%</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>1%</b> | <b>118</b>                                                                                | <b>66%</b> | <b>38</b> | <b>21%</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>4%</b> | <b>16</b>  | <b>9%</b> |

Note: N = Cong.I 52, CPI(M) 33, BJP 39, DMK 19, Janata Dal 37, and Total 180.

**Table XIII.4**  
**(Views on Corruption...contd.)**  
**Who is Mainly Responsible**  
**(Party-wise)**

| PARTY        | Who do you believe is mainly responsible for this? |            |                 |            |              |            |            |           |            |            |            |            |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|              | The Politicians                                    |            | The Bureaucrats |            | Both Equally |            | The Public |           | The System |            | No Comment |            |
|              | No.                                                | %          | No.             | %          | No.          | %          | No.        | %         | No.        | %          | No.        | %          |
| Cong.I       | 12                                                 | 23%        | 9               | 17%        | 17           | 33%        | 2          | 4%        | 10         | 19%        | 2          | 4%         |
| CPI(M)       | 13                                                 | 39%        | 2               | 6%         | 3            | 9%         | 0          | 0%        | 3          | 9%         | 12         | 36%        |
| BJP          | 18                                                 | 46%        | 1               | 3%         | 8            | 21%        | 0          | 0%        | 5          | 13%        | 7          | 18%        |
| DMK          | 2                                                  | 11%        | 4               | 21%        | 5            | 26%        | 2          | 11%       | 0          | 0%         | 6          | 32%        |
| Janata Dal   | 19                                                 | 51%        | 3               | 8%         | 10           | 27%        | 2          | 5%        | 1          | 3%         | 2          | 5%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>64</b>                                          | <b>36%</b> | <b>19</b>       | <b>11%</b> | <b>43</b>    | <b>24%</b> | <b>6</b>   | <b>3%</b> | <b>19</b>  | <b>11%</b> | <b>27</b>  | <b>15%</b> |

In Cong.I, 2 were simply "hopeful" that corruption would somehow go down. The same figure for CPI(M), BJP, and Janata Dal was 4, 9, and 2 respectively.

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

An overwhelming 90% of Cong.I MLAs responded that political culture had progressively become more corrupt in post-Independence India. To the question whether it would get any better or worse, almost three-quarters (73%) replied that they believed it would get worse. As to who was responsible, the largest proportion of MLAs (33%) said that both "politicians and bureaucrats" were equally culpable.

The next highest proportion, 23 %, blamed mainly the “politicians” as a group and 17% blamed mainly the “bureaucrats”. This indicated that 56% of the MLAs hold politicians directly or indirectly responsible for having contributed to the growth of corruption. One-fifth (19%) held “the system” responsible, meaning that the structure and culture of the polity and the society encouraged corruption.

Among CPI(M) MLAs too, a substantial majority (73 %) responded that politics had become progressively more corrupt. One-half (49%) stated said that the situation was likely to worsen in the near future, while 27% voiced the opposite view that the situation was likely to improve. The balance of 24 % did not offer any comment. If we ignore those who offered no comment, then 64 % of the respondents felt that the situation was likely to worsen in the near future. On the question of who was primarily responsible, an unexpected 39% put the blame on “politicians” but only 6 % said “bureaucracy”, and 9% said that both “politicians and bureaucrats” were equally guilty. Here again, a large proportion of legislators (36%) did not answer this question. Ignoring this group, 62 % of those who responded blamed the “politicians” for this growth in corruption. Coming as it did from Left-front legislators, this response is significant because the fashion in which we framed and posed the question did not exclude their own party, and usually most of CPI(M) MLAs are unwilling to talk openly for fear of inadvertently going against the party line. This fact also accounts for a relatively large proportion of their legislators who did not offer any comment.

An overwhelming 92 % of BJP MLAs said that politics today was more corrupt than before. A large 64% also stated that the situation was likely to get worse in the foreseeable future, while 16% felt that the situation might improve. This optimism was not based on any particular reasons or on perceived actions of the government,

but on a *hope* that things would get better. Responsibility for this deterioration was attributed to “politicians” by a majority of 46%, and only 3% put the blame mainly on “bureaucrats”. 21% said that both “politicians and bureaucrats” were equally responsible. We observe that 67% MLAs attributed the problem directly or indirectly to the politicians. 13% said that “the system” was to blame.

The response from the DMK legislators was different in the sense that only 63% expressed the view that politics was becoming progressively corrupt. This, although an impressive majority, is the lowest proportion from among our sample states. About one-third of the DMK MLAs (32%) answered “no” to this question. As to whether the situation would worsen or improve in the near future, 42% replied that it would be worse and a much lower 21% stated that it was likely to get better. A small proportion (11%) in DMK placed the responsibility on “politicians” as a group, but the largest proportion (26%) put the blame equally on both “politicians and bureaucrats”. One-fifth placed the blame on “bureaucrats” as a group. Therefore, almost one-half of the sample, directly or indirectly, attributed the growth of corruption to the bureaucrats. This is the largest proportion from among the five states.

Janata Dal MLAs were near unanimous (97%) in their view that politics had progressively become more corrupt in India. In addition, an overwhelming 84% also stated that the situation was likely to become worse in the foreseeable future. As to who was responsible, a majority of 51% put the blame on “politicians” as a group. A further 27% said that the “politicians and the bureaucrats” were equally to blame. This meant that 78% of Janata Dal MLAs thought that, directly or indirectly, the problem was intensified by the politicians.

Overall, most MLAs across party affiliations felt that Indian politics had become progressively more corrupt and that this trend was likely to continue. Most blame was placed in the direction of their own group, the “politicians”. The only exception was DMK where the intensity of this view was comparatively diluted, and where the MLAs did not by a majority put the blame primarily on the “politicians”.

Considering that this response has come from India’s state-level political elite, it is a sad reflection on the state of political ethics in contemporary India.

## XIV. VIEWS ON CASTE BASED RESERVATIONS:

Traditional social system in India was organised around caste affiliations and caste hierarchies. Over time, it also became a major theme in Indian politics. Rajni Kothari notes that “[T]hose in India who complain of casteism in politics are really looking for a sort of politics which has no basis in reality”.<sup>1</sup> Caste has always been a contentious issue in India and recent events have put it back on the national agenda.

The Indian Constitution made provisions for reserving seats for the Scheduled Castes (‘ex-untouchables’ or ‘Harijans’)<sup>2</sup> and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.<sup>3</sup> It also required, as an exception to Article 14 which bestowed equality on all Indians and prohibited discrimination based on “religion, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them”, Central and state governments to make “special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes”.<sup>4</sup>

While there has never been any serious argument about the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) who have a reservation of 22.5% in Central government

---

<sup>1</sup> ‘Introduction’ in Rajni Kothari (Ed.), *Caste in Indian Politics*, reprinted (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1986) p. 4

<sup>2</sup> Mahatma Gandhi christened them *Harijans* which translates into ‘Children of God’.

<sup>3</sup> This was based on their proportion to the population of the country or the states as applicable. See clauses 330 and 332 of the Constituion of India.

<sup>4</sup> Articles 15(4) added by the First Amendment 1951. In addition Article 335 reads, “The claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistent with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State”.



jobs and educational institutions, the question of other groups who might be considered backward (Other Backward Classes) has been one riddled with friction and ambiguity. The most serious of these is that Other Backward Classes (OBCs) are not defined in the constitution nor is there any designated method for their identification.<sup>5</sup> This has resulted in different ways of defining OBCs in different states and, despite Nehru's own personal aversion to the use of caste in doing so, most state governments have established caste as the basis of determining backwardness.<sup>6</sup> Although these castes may differ among states, generally these are castes which are low in traditional social hierarchy but higher than SCs.

The first Backward Classes Commission was set up under the Nehru administration in 1953 to determine whether, apart from SCs and STs, there were other people who needed to be treated as socially and educationally backward deserving protective discrimination. This Commission (known as Kaka Kalelkar Commission) identified 2399 backward "castes" out of which 837 were classified as most backward.<sup>7</sup>

The report of the First Backward Classes Commission was largely ignored by the Central government and in a letter to Chief Secretaries of all State governments/Union territories, the Minister of Home Affairs stated that any national list of OBCs should not be drawn up and that in the view of Government of India "it

---

<sup>5</sup> Marc Galanter, *Competing Equalities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) p.154.

<sup>6</sup> Anirudh Prasad, *Reservation Policy and Practice in India: A Means to an End* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep, 1991) p.128

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p.127

was better to apply economic tests than to go by caste”.<sup>8</sup> But, this did not stop various state-level commissions and committees from applying “caste” as the criterion for backwardness. Anirudh Prasad observes that out of eighteen state level commissions and committees, only four states applied, in varying degrees, economic criteria as the basis of backwardness. All others applied caste. In a way, this formalised caste as the logic of backwardness, rendering the word “classes” in the constitution meaningless. Obviously backwardness was viewed as an attribute “not of individuals but of communities ..[and].. Backward Classes were not classes at all but groups of communities”.<sup>9</sup>

The post-Emergency Janata Party government appointed the second Backward Classes Commission in 1978 under the chairmanship of B P Mandal (the Mandal Commission), again with a view to “determine the criteria for defining the socially and educationally backward classes ... and steps to be taken for their advancement”.<sup>10</sup> This commission identified 3743 castes as OBCs and recommended 27% reservation in Central and State government jobs and educational institutions for these backward castes.

However, by the time this report was submitted in December 1980 the Janata government had fallen and, despite favourable rhetoric within Indira Gandhi’s Cong.I, the report was ignored by the government. The whole question was revived when the

---

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Marc Galanter, *Competing Equalities* op.cit., p 177

<sup>9</sup> André Beteillé, *The Backward Classes in Contemporary India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992) p.2

<sup>10</sup> *Report of Backward Classes Commission* (New Delhi: Controller of Publications, 1981)

National Front government at the Centre, under the premiership of V P Singh (1990), attempted to implement the “reservation” recommendations of the Mandal Commission. This move attracted fairly widespread and violent demonstrations in Northern India including self-immolation by several students and became a major reason for the fall of the NF government.<sup>11</sup>

In this charged atmosphere, we asked the MLAs first, whether they agreed with principle of *caste* based reservations; second, whether they agreed with the way in which the National Front government under V P Singh had gone about its implementation; and third, whether they believed that the result of four decades of reservation policy was positive. Their answers are presented in table XIV.1 below:

**Table XIV.1**  
**Views of MLAs on Caste based Reservations**  
**(Mandal Commission)**

| VIEWS                                                             | Haryana |     | Maharashtra |     | Tamilnadu |     | West Bengal |     | Uttar Pradesh |     | Total |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                                                                   | No.     | %   | No.         | %   | No.       | %   | No.         | %   | No.           | %   | No.   | %   |
| <b>Agree that Reservations should be Caste-based:</b>             |         |     |             |     |           |     |             |     |               |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                               | 3       | 20% | 19          | 45% | 25        | 66% | 4           | 9%  | 25            | 37% | 76    | 37% |
| No                                                                | 12      | 80% | 23          | 55% | 13        | 34% | 41          | 91% | 42            | 63% | 131   | 63% |
| <b>Agree with the National Front Government's Implementation:</b> |         |     |             |     |           |     |             |     |               |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                               | 1       | 7%  | 8           | 19% | 20        | 53% | 3           | 7%  | 13            | 19% | 45    | 22% |
| No                                                                | 14      | 93% | 34          | 81% | 18        | 47% | 42          | 93% | 54            | 81% | 162   | 78% |
| <b>What is the Reservation Experience so far?</b>                 |         |     |             |     |           |     |             |     |               |     |       |     |
| Good                                                              | 1       | 7%  | 4           | 10% | 14        | 37% | 2           | 4%  | 5             | 7%  | 26    | 13% |
| Mixed                                                             | 4       | 27% | 16          | 38% | 14        | 37% | 4           | 9%  | 11            | 16% | 49    | 24% |
| Poor                                                              | 10      | 67% | 21          | 50% | 9         | 24% | 39          | 87% | 51            | 76% | 130   | 63% |
| Don't know                                                        | 0       | 0%  | 1           | 2%  | 1         | 3%  |             | 0%  |               | 0%  | 2     | 1%  |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

<sup>11</sup> See *India Today*, September 30, 1990.

In Haryana, an overwhelming (80%) of the MLAs responded “no” to the question whether they agreed with caste-based reservations. This response cut across party lines, with 71% of ruling and 87% of the opposition saying “no”. To the second question, whether they agreed with the way in which the National Front government had gone about it, an even bigger proportion (93%) said “no”. In this case, 100% of the opposition and 86% of the ruling party MLAs were included. This is a point worth noting for two reasons. First, the ruling party in Haryana at this time was Janata Dal, very much a part of the ruling National Front of V P Singh. Second, Haryana politics under the Janata Dal was based on a clear Jat versus non-Jat cleavage.<sup>12</sup> In terms of the caste hierarchy most Jats would be included in OBCs which should have created a vested interest in their response. But neither of these two issues influenced the response of Haryana MLAs. Regarding India’s experience with reservations, two-thirds of the MLAs felt that it was “poor”. Just over a quarter (27%) stated that the outcome of reservations policy was “mixed” which meant that while it was not a success, it was not entirely a failure. In this case, the ruling party MLAs were split in their response and 43% each responded “poor” and “mixed” respectively. From the ranks of the opposition, 88% said that the result was “poor”.

In Maharashtra, the response to whether there should be caste-based reservations was split with 45% saying “yes” and the balance of 55% saying “no”. A thin majority from among the ranks of the ruling party (54%) said “yes” and a majority from

---

<sup>12</sup> See Ranbir Singh, ‘The Contest in the Hindi Belt: A Study of Haryana’ in Subrata Mitra and J Chiriyankandath (Eds.) *Electoral Politics in India: A Changing Landscape* (New Delhi: Segment Books, 1993). Singh notes that the aggressive support of Jats for the party was due to their “identification of the Devi Lal government as ‘Jat Raj’”. p. 156

among the ranks of the opposition (65 %) said “no”. We have to remember that the main opposition in Maharashtra was a BJP-Shiv Sena combine. Neither is particularly sympathetic to the concept of reservation. To the question whether they agreed with the NF government’s implementation, an imposing 81 % said “no”. This opinion cut across party lines, with 82 % ruling and 80 % opposition support. Concerning the results of reservation policy, one half of Maharashtra MLAs (60 % from opposition and 41 % from the ruling party) said that the results were “poor”. Almost two-fifths (38 %) said that the results were “mixed” and this opinion was dominated by the response of the ruling party (55 %).

In Tamilnadu, we found a general support for the concept of caste-based reservations as two-thirds of our sample asserted that they agreed with caste-based reservations. But, this overall opinion had a high weightage of the ruling party, DMK’s response, of whose ranks 91 % said “yes”. In contrast, a majority of the opposition party MLAs (69 %) said that they did not agree. To the question whether they agreed with the fashion in which National Front government had tried to implement it, 53 % of the Tamilnadu MLAs answered “yes”. Again, this reply came mainly from the ruling party (DMK) which had an alliance with the National Front at the centre. Almost all (94 %) of the opposition MLAs disagreed. A significant 37 % of the legislators of Tamilnadu also expressed the opinion that the result of the policy of caste-based reservation had been “good”, the only such response from our five states. But this response was also due to the opinion of the ruling party MLAs, with almost two-thirds endorsing this view. Equally, 37 % believed that the result was “mixed” and

this response cut across party lines. Those who responded “poor” were only 24 % of the total and were all opposition MLAs, 56 % of whom were included.

In viewing this response pattern from Tamilnadu, one has to remember that caste-based reservations have been a much more accepted principle in the Southern States of India going back to the ‘Anti or Non-Brahmin’ movements in pre-independence India. Mark Galanter observes that it was in the Princely State of Mysore (in Southern India) that the “Backward classes” first acquired a technical meaning. In 1921, preferential treatment of backward communities was instituted and this included *all* communities *except* Brahmins.<sup>13</sup> André Beteillé presents this threefold division of society into Brahmin, Non Brahmin and Harijans as the basis for communal politics in Tamilnadu.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the structure of the high and low caste system in the state of Tamilnadu is such that there are virtually no middle castes. Over one-half of its population is identified as backward in addition to the SCs and STs.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, a significant majority of Tamilnadu population are members of either backward class or SC/ST. As documented by Pallanithurai, the 1984 Tamilnadu assembly had 77 % members from backward castes, 20 % SCs/STs, and only 3 % forward castes.<sup>16</sup> The problem of caste-based reservations in Tamilnadu is, therefore, structurally different from that in other states, particularly the North Indian states.

---

<sup>13</sup> Mark Galanter, *Competing Equalities* op.cit., Ch. 6

<sup>14</sup> André Beteillé, ‘Caste and Political Group Formation in Tamilnad’ in Rajni Kothari (Ed.), *Caste in Indian Politics* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1970) pp. 259-298

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* Table 20 on pp. 183-4.

<sup>16</sup> G Pallanithurai, *Role Perceptions of Legislators (A Case Study of Tamilnadu)*, op. cit.

West Bengal was a big surprise. The ruling Left-front government was in alliance with the National Front, but it is here that we observed the largest proportion of MLAs (91%) among all states who disagreed with caste-based reservations. An overwhelming (93%) also disagreed with its implementation by the NF government at the centre. Those who felt that the results of reservation policy were “poor” constituted 87%. This overwhelmingly negative response was fairly representative of the response of the ruling left-front MLAs.<sup>17</sup> To the three questions respectively, there was 89%, 92% and 83% negative response from the ruling left-front MLAs. This response, however, is in keeping with the political culture of West Bengal, where caste plays a relatively marginal role in politics.<sup>18</sup>

In Uttar Pradesh, in line with all states except Tamilnadu, a majority (63%) did not agree with caste-based reservations. However, this picture emerges due to an overwhelmingly negative response from the ruling party (BJP) MLAs, of whom 90% stated so. From the ranks of the opposition the response was split, 58% agreed while 42% did not. The opposition consisted largely of the three factions of the old Janata Dal<sup>19</sup> who were all members of India’s ruling coalition during the NF government.

---

<sup>17</sup> The official reaction of CPI(M) was a bit muted on this issue. The party appeared a reluctant supporter of Mandal. However, in Lok Sabha CPI(M) members were among the most vocal supporters of the issue. See *India Today* October 15, 1990.

<sup>18</sup> See Atul Kohli, ‘From Elite Activism to Democratic Consolidation: Political Change in West Bengal’ in Francine Frankel & M S A Rao (Eds.), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India*, 2 Vols. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989-90)

<sup>19</sup> When the V P Singh led National Front government fell in November 1990, it provoked a split in the party. A breakaway faction calling itself the *Samajwadi Janata Party* (SJP), headed by Chandra Shekhar, formed the government with the support of Rajiv Gandhi’s Cong.I. This lasted for about four months when Cong.I withdrew its support. Subsequently, Janata Dal had one more split when Ajit Singh (son of Charan Singh, ex-Prime Minister of India during the post-Emergency Janata Party rule) broke away to head Janata Dal(A).

It is therefore surprising that concerning implementation by the NF government, a huge majority (81 %) of all MLAs replied that they disagreed. In this proportion, 68 % from among the ranks of the opposition MLAs and almost the entire ruling party (97 %) were included. Once again, to the question as to the outcome of the reservation policy based on caste 76 % of the Uttar Pradesh MLAs, equally from ruling and opposition, expressed the opinion that the end result was “poor”: 90 % of the ruling party and 66 % of the opposition members belonged to this group.

Overall, taking all five states, two-thirds of MLAs (63 %) disagreed with caste-based reservations and 78 % also opposed with the way in which the NF government had attempted implementation of the Mandal Commission report. Two-thirds (63 %) of all the MLAs felt that the results of the four decade old caste-based reservation policy had been “poor”, the benefit having gone only to a handful of people while the plight of the vast majority had worsened or, at best, remained constant. West Bengal presented the most vocal disapproval of caste-based reservations, while Tamilnadu was most favourable.

### **Views of Scheduled Caste/Tribe MLAs on Caste-based Reservations**

We separately analysed the views of the SC/ST MLAs because nationally it is their constituencies who have been the main beneficiaries, together enjoying 22.5 % reservation in educational institutions and government employment opportunities. One might expect that they would be supporters of caste-based reservations. Unexpectedly, we found that nearly two-thirds of these MLAs were opposed to the policy of caste-based reservations, despite the fact that many of them clearly owed their education



and their current status to this policy of positive discrimination. The data are presented in table XIV.2 below:

**Table XIV.2**  
**Views of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe MLAs**  
**on Caste-based Reservations**  
**(Mandal Commission)**

| VIEWS                                    |        | Yes | %   | No | %   |
|------------------------------------------|--------|-----|-----|----|-----|
| Agree with Caste-based Reservations:     |        | 14  | 38% | 23 | 62% |
| Agree with NF Government Implementation: |        | 6   | 16% | 31 | 84% |
| Reservation Experience so far:           | Good:  | 3   | 8%  |    |     |
|                                          | Poor:  | 25  | 68% |    |     |
|                                          | Mixed: | 9   | 24% |    |     |

Note: N = 37

The above figures are fairly representative of all the states, except for West Bengal where 100% of the SC/ST MLAs, all from the ruling Left-front, declared that they disagreed with caste-based reservation, that they did not agree with the NF government implementation although their respective parties were part of the NF coalition, and 85% of them expressed the view that reservation policy outcomes had been “poor”. Most of SC/ST MLAs stated that proper education was needed not reservation - a view spread across all the states among SC/ST MLAs.

#### **Views on caste-based reservations (Party-wise):**

The party-wise data are presented in table XIV.3 below:

**Table XIV.3**  
**Views of MLAs on Caste-based Reservations**  
**(Mandal Commission)**  
**(Party-wise)**

| VIEWS                                                 | Cong.I |     | CPI(M) |     | BJP |     | DMK |      | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                                                       | No.    | %   | No.    | %   | No. | %   | No. | %    | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| <b>Agree that Reservations should be Caste-based:</b> |        |     |        |     |     |     |     |      |            |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                   | 16     | 31% | 6      | 18% | 4   | 10% | 19  | 100% | 20         | 54% | 65    | 36% |
| No                                                    | 36     | 69% | 27     | 82% | 35  | 90% | 0   | 0%   | 17         | 46% | 115   | 64% |
| <b>Agree with NF Government Implementation:</b>       |        |     |        |     |     |     |     |      |            |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                   | 4      | 8%  | 2      | 6%  | 2   | 5%  | 17  | 89%  | 23         | 62% | 48    | 27% |
| No                                                    | 48     | 92% | 31     | 94% | 37  | 95% | 2   | 11%  | 14         | 38% | 132   | 73% |
| <b>What is the Reservation Experience so far?</b>     |        |     |        |     |     |     |     |      |            |     |       |     |
| Good                                                  | 3      | 6%  | 1      | 3%  | 0   | 0%  | 14  | 74%  | 6          | 16% | 24    | 13% |
| Mixed                                                 | 16     | 31% | 6      | 18% | 5   | 13% | 4   | 21%  | 10         | 27% | 41    | 23% |
| Poor                                                  | 33     | 63% | 26     | 79% | 34  | 87% | 0   | 0%   | 21         | 57% | 114   | 63% |
| Don't know                                            | 0      | 0%  | 0      | 0%  | 0   | 0%  | 1   | 5%   | 0          | 0%  | 1     | 1%  |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

In Cong.I over two-thirds (69%) of the legislators were opposed to caste-based reservations, 92% to the way in which the National Front government had gone about it, and 63% believed that India's experience with these reservations was "poor" while 31% felt that the result was "mixed". In the fact that almost a two-thirds majority felt that the results were "poor", many of them were reflecting on the failure of their own party's programme - Congress has governed India for most of its post-Independence years.

Among the CPI(M) MLAs, a much higher 82% disagreed with caste-based reservations. To the question whether they agreed with the NF government's implementation, a massive 94% said "no". We have to judge this response in the light of the fact that CPI(M) was a partner in the NF government. The official line

taken by the CPI(M) led Left-front favoured the Mandal Commission report. A substantial majority of CPI(M) MLAs (79%) said that the results of the reservation policy were “poor”, 18% responded “mixed” and a token 3% said “good”.

A near total (90%) of BJP MLAs disagreed with the policy of caste-based reservations and 95% with its implementation. As a party, BJP has never unequivocally supported caste-based reservations, though in practice it has also applied caste calculations in the electoral arena. It was suggested to the author that in appointing Kalyan Singh (from a backward caste) as the head of its UP government in 1991, BJP was attempting to shed its anti-backward image.<sup>20</sup> On the last question, 87% of BJP MLAs felt that the outcome of forty years of reservation policy was “poor”.

DMK was a total contrast. All its legislators agreed with caste-based reservations and 89% also approved of the way in which the NF government tried to implement the policy. They reflected the special characteristics not only of Tamilnadu but also of the South. To the question whether the results of four decades of reservation policy were any good, a large majority of 74% answered “yes” and there was not even a single legislator who said that the outcome of this policy was generally “poor”. In this response, DMK was unique.

Janata Dal MLAs were divided in their response to the questions relating to the principle and implementation of the caste-based reservation policy. A slim majority

---

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Mr V P Singh, ex-PM of India, in Lucknow during February 1992.

of 54 % said that they agreed with caste-based reservations but 46 % disagreed. Almost two-thirds (62 %) approved of the implementation by NF government, but a significant 38 % disagreed. This is important, because NF was a Janata Dal led coalition and with this response the MLAs were censuring their own leadership. A majority of the Janata Dal MLAs (57 %) said that the outcome of reservations policy had been “poor”. Only 16 % believed that the results of this policy were “good”.

Overall, two-thirds of MLAs (64 %) from these five parties did not agree with caste-based reservations, and an even greater proportion (73 %) disapproved of the implementation of Mandal Commission’s report by the NF government. In addition, 63 % of all the MLAs felt that the results of the four decade old caste-based reservation policy had been “poor”, the benefit having gone only to a small elite among SCs and STs, while the plight of the vast majority of them had worsened or, at best, remained constant. DMK was the only party clearly in favour of caste-based reservations and Janata Dal had a moderate response. All others were categorically against the concept.

## Views of Scheduled Caste/Tribe MLAs on Caste-based Reservations (Party-wise)

This is a small sample, and we cannot read too much into it, but it offers a qualitative response of a select group. In line with the state-wise response, 61% of SC/ST MLAs on a party-wise basis were opposed to the policy of caste-based reservations. The party-wise data is presented in table XIV.4 below:

**Table XIV.4**  
**Views of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe MLAs**  
**on Caste-based Reservations**  
**(Mandal Commission)**  
**(Party-wise)**

| VIEWS                                                 | Cong.I |      | CPI(M) |      | BJP |      | DMK |      | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------|------|--------|------|-----|------|-----|------|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                                                       | No.    | %    | No.    | %    | No. | %    | No. | %    | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| <b>Agree that Reservations should be Caste-based:</b> |        |      |        |      |     |      |     |      |            |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                   | 3      | 75%  | 2      | 18%  | 1   | 10%  | 2   | 100% | 5          | 83% | 13    | 39% |
| No                                                    | 1      | 25%  | 9      | 82%  | 9   | 90%  | 0   | 0%   | 1          | 17% | 20    | 61% |
| <b>Agree with NF Government Implementation:</b>       |        |      |        |      |     |      |     |      |            |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                   | 0      | 0%   | 0      | 0%   | 0   | 0%   | 2   | 100% | 3          | 50% | 5     | 15% |
| No                                                    | 4      | 100% | 11     | 100% | 10  | 100% | 0   | 0%   | 3          | 50% | 28    | 85% |
| <b>What is the Reservation Experience so far?</b>     |        |      |        |      |     |      |     |      |            |     |       |     |
| Good                                                  | 0      | 0%   | 0      | 0%   | 0   | 0%   | 2   | 100% | 1          | 17% | 3     | 9%  |
| Mixed                                                 | 3      | 75%  | 3      | 27%  | 1   | 10%  | 0   | 0%   | 1          | 17% | 8     | 24% |
| Poor                                                  | 1      | 25%  | 8      | 73%  | 9   | 90%  | 0   | 0%   | 4          | 67% | 22    | 67% |
| Don't know                                            | 0      | 0%   | 0      | 0%   | 0   | 0%   | 0   | 0%   | 0          | 0%  | 0     | 0%  |

Note: N = 33; Cong.I 4, CPI(M) 11, BJP 10, DMK 2, and Janata Dal 6

\* 9 out of 11 SC/ST MLAs from CPI(M) said 'Education' was far more important to help SC/STs.

The SC/ST MLAs from Cong.I, DMK and Janata Dal agreed with the policy of caste-based reservations while those from the CPI(M) and BJP disagreed. In the former category, DMK led the group with all its MLAs favouring caste-based reservations, followed by Janata Dal (83%) and Cong.I (75%). Most MLAs from BJP (90%) and CPI(M) (82%) disagreed. On implementation, we again saw a split response. All MLAs from DMK agreed, and all MLAs from three of the other four parties,

Cong.I, CPI(M), and BJP were opposed. The SC MLAs from Janata Dal were equally split with 50% “yes” and 50% “no”. On the question of whether the outcome of four decades of reservation policy had been good, the response was again unfavourable except DMK. A majority of Cong.I MLAs (75%) said that the outcome was “mixed” and therefore not strictly a success or a failure and the balance of 25% said that it was “poor”. From the CPI(M) the response was almost exactly the other way around with 73% responding “poor”, and 27% saying “mixed”. In BJP, an overwhelming 90% and from the Janata Dal 67% said that the results were “poor”. This is an extraordinary response coming as it does from the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe MLAs who are commenting from their own personal experience as well as that of their communities. Most of these MLAs stated that proper education was needed and not reservation, and this view was spread across all parties although overwhelmingly so in CPI(M).

## XV VIEWS ON PANCHAYATI RAJ

Village Panchayats may have been a part of traditional rural culture in India, but the post-Independence concept of *Panchayati Raj* has given a new meaning to this institution. Viewing it as a critical component of local participation, the Constitution of India provided that “The State shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government”.<sup>1</sup>

Panchayati Raj (PR) was formally instituted in 1959, two years after the recommendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta committee which suggested a three tier system consisting of Gram (village) Panchayat, the Panchayat Samiti (intermediate level), and the Zilla Parishad (district level). Several states in India adopted the recommendations of this committee but generally with sub-optimal results contrasted with the great expectations that the policy had generated.<sup>2</sup> One of the main problems appears to be that PR remained a state-downward rather than a village-upward institution, resulting in considerable political and bureaucratic interference.

Their poor performance led the Janata government (1977-79) to appointed another the Ashok Mehta committee, which reported in 1978. This committee sharply criticised the bureaucracy for its perceived role in dissociating PR institutions from rural development and suggested a modified structure of PR Institutions.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Article 40

<sup>2</sup> See Shriram Maheshwari, *Local Government in India*, Revised edition (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1976)

<sup>3</sup> See *Report of the Committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions*, (New Delhi, 1978) - known as Ashok Mehta Committee Report.

But things have changed little. Even in states where Panchayati Raj is perceived to be successful, it is dogged with controversy. Most observers feel that PR has been generally hijacked by the locally powerful factions in villages and that the benefits anticipated have not come about.<sup>4</sup> S N Mishra labels Panchayati Raj “a God that failed”.<sup>5</sup>

It is an issue on which there has been considerable debate in India. During the last year of the Cong.I - Rajiv Gandhi government, a Panchayati Raj bill was introduced which sought to give the Centre complete control over disbursement of rural development funds to Panchayats across the country. It also sought to provide certain powers to the PR Institutions, including the power to raise finances and spend them on specified activities without the prior approval of the state governments. Expectedly, this evoked strong disagreement from the opposition parties and eventually it was not pushed through.<sup>6</sup>

MLAs are generally exposed to the working of various village and block-level Panchayat institutions. In exploring their views on this issue we asked three questions:  
a) did they think that Panchayati Raj was the best means of rural development in

---

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, S R Maheshwari, *Rural Development in India: A Public Policy Approach* (New Delhi: Sage, 1985). In exploring the reasons for the failure of Panchayati Institutions, he Comments that “in the first place, Panchayati Raj Institutions came to be dominated by the socially or economically privileged sections in the local community with the consequence that the weaker groups - such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other poorer groups - were still deprived of its benefits. Second, these institutions have remained convulsed in factionalism, and thus the developmental thrust expected from them was either distorted or weakened. Third, their functioning disclosed the prevalence of considerable corruption and inefficiency. Elected personnel have often ignored rules of procedure and indulged in favouritism”. p. 54. Also see, George Mathew (Ed.) *Panchayati Raj in Karnataka Today: its national dimensions* (New Delhi: Institute of Social Sciences, 1986)

<sup>5</sup> S N Mishra, *Panchayati Raj Bureaucracy and Rural Development* (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1986) p.7

<sup>6</sup> See *India Today*, May 31, 1989, for a detailed table listing the main changes sought by the proposed amendment. pp.18-21



India? b) did Panchayati Raj lead to a domination and cornering of resources by the locally powerful groups on a caste, money or muscle basis? And, c) did Panchayati Raj lead to even more corruption and therefore further leakage of resources meant for rural development and/or for helping the rural poor? The response of the legislators is presented in table XV.1 below:

**Table XV.1**  
**Views of MLAs on Panchayati Raj**

| VIEWS                                                         | Haryana |     | Maharashtra |     | Tamilnadu |     | West Bengal |     | Uttar Pradesh |     | Total |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                                                               | No.     | %   | No.         | %   | No.       | %   | No.         | %   | No.           | %   | No.   | %   |
| <b>Is Panchayati Raj the best means of Rural Development?</b> |         |     |             |     |           |     |             |     |               |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                           | 4       | 27% | 33          | 79% | 33        | 87% | 41          | 91% | 26            | 39% | 137   | 66% |
| No                                                            | 11      | 73% | 6           | 14% | 3         | 8%  | 3           | 7%  | 20            | 30% | 43    | 21% |
| Yes, but only with Reform                                     |         |     | 3           | 7%  | 2         | 5%  | 1           | 2%  | 21            | 31% | 27    | 13% |
| <b>Does it increase domination by local power groups?</b>     |         |     |             |     |           |     |             |     |               |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                           | 13      | 87% | 23          | 55% | 19        | 50% | 11          | 24% | 50            | 75% | 116   | 56% |
| No                                                            | 2       | 13% | 19          | 45% | 19        | 50% | 34          | 76% | 17            | 25% | 91    | 44% |
| <b>Does it lead to increased leakage of resources?</b>        |         |     |             |     |           |     |             |     |               |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                           | 11      | 73% | 16          | 38% | 11        | 29% | 21          | 47% | 45            | 67% | 104   | 50% |
| No                                                            | 4       | 27% | 26          | 62% | 27        | 71% | 24          | 53% | 22            | 33% | 103   | 50% |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, 73% of MLAs were negative to Panchayati Raj (PR) as a means of rural development; 87% agreed that PR led to domination by the locally powerful muscle, caste, or money group; and, 73% believed that PR led to a greater leakage of resources. On all these three issues the response cut across party lines and therefore represented views of MLAs generally. P D Sharma's study of Haryana state legislators had noted similar response as less than one-quarter of his sample agreed that PR was successful.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> P D Sharma, *Legislative Elite in India: A Study in Political Socialization* op.cit.

Maharashtra, in contrast, supported Panchayati Raj - 79% of the MLAs expressed the view that PR was the best means for rural development. In view of this response, it was surprising that a majority (55%) stated that domination by locally powerful groups was likely to increase within PR. This conforms to Jayant Lele's study which provides good examples of elite hegemony in Panchayati Raj institutions in Maharashtra.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, a majority felt that, despite elite domination, PR aided village development and that over time such domination was bound to weaken. On the question of whether PR increased corruption, 62% of the MLAs disagreed, but a significant proportion (38%) agreed. Half of the latter group, however, still supported PR as the best means for rural development. Once again, this response cut across party lines representing views of MLAs generally without any bias to their political affiliation.

In Tamilnadu, the opinion was overwhelmingly in favour of Panchayati Raj - 87%. For half of the MLAs PR led to increased local hegemony by powerful groups, nonetheless they endorsed it as the best means available for developmental effort at rural level. Most MLAs (71%) disagreed that PR increased corruption, but a significant 29% agreed. In line with both Haryana and Maharashtra, these views cut across party lines.

In West Bengal, a massive 91% - the highest proportion from any state - endorsed the view that PR was the best means for rural development, the response cutting across party lines. Virtually all ruling left-front MLAs (97%) and two-thirds from opposition were in this group. The latter is significant because Panchayati Raj in West Bengal was implemented by the CPI(M) led Left-front and there is known hostility

---

<sup>8</sup> Jayant Lele, *Elite Pluralism and Class Rule: Political Development in Maharashtra, India* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981)

between CPI(M) and the chief opposition, Cong.I, who often allege that Panchayati Raj has been politically hijacked by the CPI(M).<sup>9</sup> Three-quarters disagreed that PR increased domination by strong local groups, but a quarter concurred. Here we saw a striking contrast between the ruling left-front and the opposition. Whereas 89% from the ruling benches asserted that there was no such hegemony, 78% of the opposition took the contrary view and declared that locally dominant groups took Panchayats under their control. The tongue in cheek reference here was to the local CPI(M) cadres. The question whether PR encouraged corruption met the same divergence of response between ruling and opposition parties. All opposition MLAs (100%) stated that Panchayati Raj increased corruption: most of the Panchayats in the state of West Bengal are controlled by the Left-front. The important fact, however, is that a significant proportion (33%) from the ruling benches also endorsed this view notwithstanding the generally guarded nature of Left-front responses.

In Uttar Pradesh, in contrast to West Bengal, just two-fifths (39%) of the MLAs agreed that PR was the best means for rural development. However, one-third felt that although currently PR was not working, it “could be” made the best means of development provided there was reform in its structure and in its implementation. The reforms that most MLAs had in mind pertained exactly to our two questions relating to power-grabbing by the locally strong, and to the relative unaccountability of Panchayats resulting in corruption within the institution. In a response that cut across party lines, there was support for PR in principle, but disenchantment with the way in which it had hitherto functioned. The question of domination by locally hegemonic

---

<sup>9</sup> See Atul Kohli, *The State and Poverty in India* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University press, 1987) pp. 108-117. Also see, Neil Webster, ‘Panchayati Raj in West Bengal: Popular participation for People or the Party’ in *Development and Change* Vol.23, No.4, Oct 92. Webster, while writing favourably about CPI(M), nevertheless details that Panchayati Raj appears to have been manipulated for political ends.

groups elicited a “yes” response from three-quarters of the MLAs, again across party lines. On the problem of leakage of resources, two-thirds of the UP MLAs, across party lines, concurred. In Uttar Pradesh, enthusiasm for Panchayati Raj was clearly limited.

Taking all the sampled states, 66% of the MLAs supported PR as the best instrument of rural development in India even though half the sample were concerned that PR led to hegemony by the locally powerful caste or group with money/muscle power, and more corruption and leakage of resources. The least support came from the two northern states of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.<sup>10</sup> The maximum support came from West Bengal, where the ruling left-front has heavily promoted PR. However, a significant proportion within the ruling left-front were anxious that Panchayati Raj was contributing to increasing leakage of resources meant for rural development.

### **Views of Rural MLAs on Panchayati Raj**

Taking cognizance of the fact that rural areas are most affected by Panchayati Raj, we analysed separately the views of those MLAs who had their main residence in a rural location. The sample is small but we get some qualitative responses. The data is presented in table XV.2 below:

---

<sup>10</sup> We have observed this streak earlier in Chapters XIII on Corruption.

**Table XV.2**  
**Views on Panchayati Raj**  
**(MLAs with Rural Background)**

| VIEWS                                                         | Haryana |      | Maharashtra |     | Tamilnadu |     | West Bengal |     | Uttar Pradesh |     | Total |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------|-------------|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                                                               | No.     | %    | No.         | %   | No.       | %   | No.         | %   | No.           | %   | No.   | %   |
| <b>Is Panchayati Raj the best means of Rural Development?</b> |         |      |             |     |           |     |             |     |               |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                           | 0       | 0%   | 6           | 75% | 8         | 89% | 21          | 95% | 9             | 24% | 44    | 70% |
| No                                                            | 3       | 100% | 2           | 25% | 1         | 11% | 1           | 5%  | 7             | 18% | 14    | 22% |
| Yes, but only with reform                                     |         |      |             |     |           |     |             |     | 5             | 13% | 5     | 6%  |
| <b>Does it increase domination by local power groups?</b>     |         |      |             |     |           |     |             |     |               |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                           | 2       | 67%  | 4           | 50% | 4         | 44% | 6           | 27% | 16            | 42% | 32    | 40% |
| No                                                            | 1       | 33%  | 4           | 50% | 5         | 56% | 16          | 73% | 5             | 13% | 31    | 39% |
| <b>Does it lead to increased leakage of resources?</b>        |         |      |             |     |           |     |             |     |               |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                           | 2       | 67%  | 4           | 50% | 3         | 33% | 9           | 41% | 15            | 39% | 33    | 52% |
| No                                                            | 1       | 33%  | 4           | 50% | 6         | 67% | 13          | 59% | 6             | 16% | 30    | 48% |

**Note:** N = Haryana 3, Maharashtra 8, Tamilnadu 9, West Bengal 22, Uttar Pradesh 21 and Total 63.  
 In Haryana, all three rural respondents held Panchayat position during their political career  
 In Maharashtra, 5 out of 8 respondents held Panchayat position during their political career  
 In Tamilnadu, 4 out of 9 respondents held Panchayat position during their political career  
 In West Bengal, 13 out of 22 respondents held Panchayat position during their political career  
 In U.P. only 3 out of 21 rural MLAs held Panchayat position during their political career.

In Haryana, only 20% of the total sample had a rural residence and all were opposed to Panchayati Raj. Two-thirds stated that it increased domination by local “bosses”, and led to an increased leakages of resources by providing increased opportunity for corruption. Although this is an extremely small sample, their views are in keeping with the views of the entire Haryana sample as seen in table XV.1.

Maharashtra’s rural MLAs echoed the entire sample and responded generally in favour of PR. Three-quarters (75%) stated that PR was the best means of rural development as compared to 79% from the total sample. One-half said that it led to locally powerful groups dominating the Panchayats, compared to 55% from the total sample. But on corruption, one-half of the rural-residence MLAs said “yes”

compared to 38% from the total. Clearly, there is a problem that rural MLAs experience but others tend to minimise.

In Tamilnadu, the rural MLAs had a favourable view of PR and generally followed the ratios of the total sample from their state. Almost 90% believed that Panchayati Raj was good for rural development, 56% said that no local domination took place, and 71% denied that it led to increasing corruption.

The pattern of Tamilnadu was replicated in West Bengal. Nearly all (95%) rural MLAs favoured PR. Three-quarters felt that there was no domination by any particular group, and 59% stated that there was no increase in corruption which, of course meant that a significant 41% felt that corruption increased under PR. Considering that all of these members were from the ruling left-front this is a significant response pattern and lends some credence to studies which are critical of PR in West Bengal.<sup>11</sup>

The Uttar Pradesh rural MLAs, while not in favour of PR by a majority, differed from the views expressed by the entire state sample. On the question of whether PR was the best means for rural development, a relatively smaller 24%, compared to 39% in the total group, reacted favourably. But the response to the other two questions was more positive as compared to the total sample from the state. Only 42%, compared to 75% from the total sample, concurred that PR created hegemony of locally powerful groups; and only 39%, compared to 67% in the total group, agreed that PR led to more corruption.

---

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Arun Ghosh, 'Popular Participation and Decentralised Planning' in *Economic and Political Weekly* 16 January 1988.

We also analysed the response by limiting it to MLAs who had a background of having held a Panchayat position. Though this sample is small, we felt that their views, based on their personal experience of working within a Panchayat, might more accurately represent ground conditions. However, we did not observe any significant variance in their response pattern, except that a higher proportion stated that Panchayats were grabbed by the locally powerful groups. The data are presented in table XV.3 below:

**Table XV.3**  
**Views on Panchayat Raj**  
**(MLAs with background of Panchayat Position)**

| VIEWS                                                         | Haryana |      | Maharashtra |     | Tamilnadu |      | West Bengal |     | Uttar Pradesh |      | Total |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------|-------------|-----|-----------|------|-------------|-----|---------------|------|-------|-----|
|                                                               | No.     | %    | No.         | %   | No.       | %    | No.         | %   | No.           | %    | No.   | %   |
| <b>Is Panchayat Raj the best means for Rural Development?</b> |         |      |             |     |           |      |             |     |               |      |       |     |
| Yes                                                           | 1       | 20%  | 9           | 75% | 8         | 100% | 13          | 86% | 1             | 33%  | 32    | 74% |
| No                                                            | 4       | 80%  | 2           | 17% | 0         | 0%   | 1           | 7%  | 1             | 33%  | 8     | 19% |
| Yes, but only with reform                                     |         | 0%   | 1           | 8%  |           | 0%   | 1           | 7%  | 1             | 33%  | 3     | 7%  |
| <b>Does it increase domination by local power groups?</b>     |         |      |             |     |           |      |             |     |               |      |       |     |
| Yes                                                           | 5       | 100% | 8           | 67% | 2         | 25%  | 5           | 33% | 3             | 100% | 23    | 53% |
| No                                                            | 0       | 0%   | 4           | 33% | 6         | 75%  | 10          | 67% | 0             | 0%   | 20    | 47% |
| <b>Does it lead to increased leakage of resources?</b>        |         |      |             |     |           |      |             |     |               |      |       |     |
| Yes                                                           | 3       | 60%  | 5           | 42% | 2         | 25%  | 7           | 47% | 3             | 100% | 20    | 47% |
| No                                                            | 2       | 40%  | 7           | 58% | 6         | 75%  | 8           | 53% | 0             | 0%   | 23    | 53% |

Note: N = Haryana 5, Maharashtra 12, Tamilnadu 8, West Bengal 15, Uttar Pradesh 3, and Total 43.

Compared to the views of MLAs with rural residence, this group demonstrated a stronger feeling that PR led to power-grabbing by the locally powerful (53% as against 40% of those with rural residence). Having viewed it from three different angles, we observe that while there is a general endorsement for Panchayati Raj as a vehicle of rural development, there is a parallel scepticism that it leads to distortions at local level.

## Views on Panchayati Raj (Party-wise)

The party-wise response is presented in table XV.4 below:

**Table XV.4**  
**Views of MLAs on Panchayati Raj**  
**(Party-wise)**

| VIEWS                                                           | Cong.I |     | CPI(M) |     | BJP |     | DMK |     | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                                                                 | No.    | %   | No.    | %   | No. | %   | No. | %   | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| <b>Is Panchayati Raj the best means for rural development ?</b> |        |     |        |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                             | 36     | 69% | 30     | 91% | 18  | 46% | 18  | 95% | 15         | 41% | 117   | 65% |
| No                                                              | 10     | 19% | 1      | 3%  | 12  | 31% | 1   | 5%  | 13         | 35% | 37    | 21% |
| Yes, but only with Reform                                       | 6      | 12% | 2      | 6%  | 9   | 23% |     | 0%  | 9          | 24% | 26    | 14% |
| <b>Does it increase domination by local power groups ?</b>      |        |     |        |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                             | 32     | 62% | 4      | 12% | 31  | 79% | 9   | 47% | 27         | 73% | 103   | 57% |
| No                                                              | 20     | 38% | 29     | 88% | 8   | 21% | 10  | 53% | 10         | 27% | 77    | 43% |
| <b>Does it lead to increased leakage of resources ?</b>         |        |     |        |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                             | 26     | 50% | 10     | 30% | 28  | 72% | 5   | 26% | 24         | 65% | 93    | 52% |
| No                                                              | 26     | 50% | 23     | 70% | 11  | 28% | 14  | 74% | 13         | 35% | 87    | 48% |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

In Cong.I, 69% said that PR was the best means of rural development and 19% disagreed. The balance of 12% said that PR was good in principle but that in practice considerable reform was needed. Combining the last two responses, 31% felt negatively. Paradoxically, 62% concurred that PR led to domination by the locally powerful muscle, caste, or money group and opinion on leakage of resources was split in the middle. Thus Cong.I provided us with an indeterminate response.

In the CPI(M), virtually all (91%) MLAs stated that PR was the best means of rural development and 88% said that it did not increase domination by any locally powerful group. Regarding corruption, 70% said that it did not lead to any increased corruption, but this also meant that a significant 30% from the ranks of a disciplined cadre party, a party which has implemented the concept of PR better than any other



party in India,<sup>12</sup> took the stand that corruption increased as a result of Panchayati Raj. This negative response certainly carries extra weight because of the normally guarded responses given by CPI(M) MLAs to our various questions thus far.

Most MLAs from BJP (46%) positively endorsed PR but there was a significant proportion (31%) who took the opposite stand. 23% said that PR was good in principle but it needed reforms in order to be an effective vehicle of rural development. If we add the last two categories, there was a small majority (54%) who felt negatively about PR. On increased domination by locally powerful groups, a striking majority (79%) of BJP agreed, and 72% added that PR increased leakage of resources at the rural level. BJP opinion is therefore divided and, although a numeric majority said that they agreed PR was the best means of rural development, their responses to the other two questions indicated that there were generally more negative than positive feelings.

From DMK, the highest majority (95%) from among any of our sampled parties, endorsed Panchayati Raj. However, the opinion regarding domination by locally powerful groups was split with a marginal majority of 53% (pro) disagreeing, while the balance of 47% (con) took the opposite stand. On whether PR increased corruption at local levels, DMK MLAs disagreed by a large proportion of 74%. The DMK, like the CPI(M), demonstrated a strikingly favourable opinion on Panchayati Raj.

From Janata Dal, as in the case of BJP, we observed that a small majority endorsed PR - 41% against 35% who said "no". A quarter stated that PR was good in principle

---

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Atul Kohli, *The State and Poverty in India* op.cit., Ch. 3; T J Nossiter, *Marxist State Governments in India* (London: Pinter, 1988)

but needed reform before it could be effective. Adding this proportion to those who felt negatively about PR, we detected a majority of 59% who did not unequivocally endorse PR. To the question whether PR increased domination by locally powerful groups, a large majority of 73% replied in the affirmative. Following on from this, a near two-thirds majority (65%) agreed that PR increased corruption. The overall view from this party therefore is on the negative side.

### Views of Rural MLAs on Panchayati Raj (party-wise)

The party-wise data in this respect are presented in table XV.5 below:

**Table XV.5**  
**Views of MLAs with Rural**  
**background on Panchayati Raj**  
**(Party-wise)**

| VIEWS                                                           | Cong.I |     | CPI(M) |     | BJP |     | DMK |      | Janata Dal |     | Total |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------------|-----|-------|-----|
|                                                                 | No.    | %   | No.    | %   | No. | %   | No. | %    | No.        | %   | No.   | %   |
| <b>Is Panchayati Raj the best means for Rural Development ?</b> |        |     |        |     |     |     |     |      |            |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                             | 7      | 64% | 16     | 94% | 4   | 40% | 2   | 100% | 6          | 40% | 35    | 64% |
| No                                                              | 1      | 9%  | 0      | 0%  | 5   | 50% | 0   | 0%   | 4          | 27% | 10    | 18% |
| Yes, but only with reform                                       | 3      | 27% | 1      | 6%  | 1   | 10% | 0   | 0%   | 5          | 33% | 10    | 18% |
| <b>Does it increase domination by local power groups ?</b>      |        |     |        |     |     |     |     |      |            |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                             | 8      | 73% | 2      | 12% | 7   | 70% | 0   | 0%   | 12         | 80% | 29    | 53% |
| No                                                              | 3      | 27% | 15     | 88% | 3   | 30% | 2   | 100% | 3          | 20% | 26    | 47% |
| <b>Does it lead to increased leakage of resources ?</b>         |        |     |        |     |     |     |     |      |            |     |       |     |
| Yes                                                             | 7      | 64% | 4      | 24% | 9   | 90% | 0   | 0%   | 9          | 60% | 29    | 53% |
| No                                                              | 4      | 36% | 13     | 76% | 1   | 10% | 2   | 100% | 6          | 40% | 26    | 47% |

Note: N = Cong.I 11; CPI(M) 17; BJP 10; DMK 2; Janata Dal 15; and Total 55.

In Cong.I, only 21% of the total sample of MLAs had rural residence: two-thirds said that PR was good for rural development. Only 9% disagreed, while 27% took the stand that PR needed reform. Adding together these last two categories, 36% of rural resident MLAs gave a negative response. In response to the other two questions, 73%

felt that PR led to domination by the locally powerful groups, and 64 % stated that PR increased corruption. These last two answers are important in view of the fact that these are the considered comments of rural MLAs who should certainly be more familiar with the ground performance of Panchayati Raj.

CPI(M) was a total contrast. Over half of its MLAs were from rural areas. They overwhelmingly (94 %) endorsed PR, and disagreed that PR led to hegemony of the locally powerful groups (88 %), or to more corruption ( 76 %). This endorsement for PR should be viewed in the context of the vested interest in Panchayati Raj created by the CPI(M)'s political strategy.<sup>13</sup>

Among BJP's MLAs with rural residence, 50 % said that PR would be good only if it was reformed, and 10 % straight away branded it unsuitable. Thus, 60 % felt negatively about PR and 70 % agreed that PR increased domination by locally powerful groups. In line with this unfavourable view, an overwhelming 90 % stated that PR increased corruption. Clearly the BJP MLAs from rural areas, most of whom were elected as legislators for the first time, are negative to Panchayati Raj.

All of DMK's rural MLAs (a small sample of two) fully endorsed Panchayati Raj as the best means of rural development and denied that it increased local domination or corruption in any way.

---

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter III

In Janata Dal, rural MLAs were split as the total party sample. 40% of their rural MLAs took the stand that PR was good for rural development. However one-third (33%) felt that Panchayati Raj could be good but that it needed reform and 27% rejected it outright. Adding together these last two categories, we detect a 60% negative response. To the question whether Panchayati Raj helped increase domination by locally powerful groups, an overwhelming 80% of the Janata Dal rural MLAs responded “yes”. Concerning increase in the level of corruption, an equal four-fifths agreed.

Overall, rural MLAs from the CPI(M) and DMK appeared to be unequivocally in favour of Panchayati Raj. The BJP and Janata Dal viewed it unfavourably. So far as Cong.I was concerned, while a majority of its rural MLAs stated that Panchayati Raj was good for rural development, they were generally negative about local hegemony and corruption, thereby indicating a generally unfavourable view.

## XVI. VIEWS ON CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS

Centre-state relations have been a contentious issue in India, a subject of much debate and argument between India's Union government and the states. The fact that Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, which permits the dismissal of elected state level governments by the Centre, has been used frequently, often without apparent justification, provides the opposition parties with a strong weapon to force debate on the whole question of Centre-state relations.<sup>1</sup>

The bigger problem, however, has been the financial relationship between the Centre and the states. As financial resources are concentrated in the hands of the Centre, their allocation among states is often alleged to be discriminatory.<sup>2</sup> Paul Brass observes that "the Finance Commissions which are responsible for the distribution to the states of centrally collected taxes, have done little to rectify regional imbalances among states".<sup>3</sup> This apart, the leadership in the states argues that the Centre starves those states which are ruled by opposition parties. During a personal interview with the author, Kalyan Singh, the BJP Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh (1991-92) commented that the Centre funded state governments as though these were small

---

<sup>1</sup> The Governor is appointed by the Centre and has the Constitutional authority to give formal approval to the decisions made by state governments. He is meant to be an impartial observer but has increasingly come to be seen as a partisan agent of the Centre. Between 1950 and January 1990, article 356 has been used 74 times: 7 times under Nehru, twice under Shastri, 47 times under Mrs. Gandhi's two terms, and 14 times under Janata Party. For details see *President's Rule in States* (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1985). See also, J R Siwach, *Dynamics of Indian Government and Politics* op.cit., Chapters 30 and 31.

<sup>2</sup> M A Lizy, *Centre-State Financial Relations in India* (New Delhi: Ashok Publishing, 1990) p. 187

<sup>3</sup> Paul Brass, *The New Cambridge History of India: The Politics of India Since Independence*, op. cit., p. 61

Municipal Corporations.<sup>4</sup> It is not within the scope of the present thesis to go into details of this controversy but the consensus among scholars is that there has been inequitable distribution of resources both vertically, between the Centre and states, and horizontally, between different states.<sup>5</sup>

Centre-state relations have been particularly acrimonious since 1967, when Congress lost power for the first time in several states at once.<sup>6</sup> Mrs. Gandhi's subsequent centralizing drives only exacerbated the issue.<sup>7</sup> Eventually, in 1983, a Commission was appointed to examine and review the existing arrangements and make suitable recommendations. This Commission was headed by Justice Sarkaria and is commonly known as the Sarkaria Commission.<sup>8</sup>

The Sarkaria Commission's findings corroborated some of the allegations made by the non-Congress parties. Its following observations are particularly relevant: first,

---

<sup>4</sup> Interview conducted during February 1992. For the viewpoints of opposition parties, see Shubh N Singh, *Centre State Relations in India: Major Irritants and Post-Sarkaria Review* (New Delhi: H K Publishers, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Shubh N Singh, *Centre State Relations in India: Major Irritants and Post-Sarkaria Review* (New Delhi: H K Publishers, 1990); Muppidi Sarojini, *Finance Commission and Centre-State Relations* (Allahabad: Chugh Publications, 1991); D T Lakdawala, 'Eighth Finance Commission's Recommendations' in I S Gulati (Ed.) *Centre-State Budgetary Transfers* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1987)

<sup>6</sup> The 1967 elections resulted in non-congress governments in eight states, viz., Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Tamilnadu, and Kerala. Many of these were coalitions which did not last very long. In Tamilnadu, however, Congress never came back and the state has since been ruled by the regional parties, DMK or AIADMK.

<sup>7</sup> These have been well documented. See, for example, Paul Brass, 'Pluralism, Regionalism and Decentralising Tendencies in Contemporary Indian Politics' in A Jeyaratnam Wilson & Dennis Dalton (Eds.) *The States of South Asia: Problems of National Integration* (London: C Hurst & Co., 1982); Lloyd I Rudolph & Susanne H Rodolph, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political economy of the Indian State* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987)

<sup>8</sup> Sarkaria Commission was constituted per Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, notification no. IV/11017/1/83 - CSR dated June 27, 1983. Subsequently two more members were inducted, B Sivaraman on July 7, 1983, and Dr D R Sen on July 27, 1983. The committee submitted its report in 1988.

that over 60% of the Centre-appointed Governors of states took partisan part in politics, and second, that there were at least eighteen cases where Article 356 was grossly misused for political purposes.<sup>9</sup>

With this background, we investigated the views of MLAs on Centre-state relations. We did so by formulating three questions: first, did they feel that India needed a strong Central government? We considered this question important because four out of the five states in our sample were being ruled by parties in opposition to the Cong.I at the Centre. Second, whether, in their view, Centre-state relations had deteriorated in the past two decades, and third, whether they had any knowledge of Sarkaria Commission's main recommendations. The data relating to the first two questions are presented in table XVI.1 below:

**Table XVI.1**  
**Views of MLAs on Centre-state Relations**

| STATE         | Do we need a Strong Centre |     |    |    | Change in Centre-state Relations |     |       |     |      |     |            |    |
|---------------|----------------------------|-----|----|----|----------------------------------|-----|-------|-----|------|-----|------------|----|
|               | Yes                        | %   | No | %  | Better                           | %   | Worse | %   | Same | %   | Don't Know | %  |
| Haryana       | 14                         | 93% | 1  | 7% |                                  | 0%  | 12    | 80% | 2    | 13% | 1          | 7% |
| Maharashtra   | 40                         | 95% | 2  | 5% | 1                                | 2%  | 18    | 43% | 21   | 50% | 2          | 5% |
| Tamilnadu     | 37                         | 97% | 1  | 3% | 3                                | 8%  | 23    | 61% | 10   | 26% | 2          | 5% |
| West Bengal   | 43                         | 96% | 2  | 4% | 5                                | 11% | 32    | 71% | 7    | 16% | 1          | 2% |
| Uttar Pradesh | 63*                        | 94% | 4  | 6% |                                  | 0%  | 52    | 78% | 15   | 22% |            | 0% |
| Total         | 197                        | 95% | 10 | 5% | 9                                | 4%  | 137   | 66% | 55   | 27% | 6          | 3% |

Note\* : 13 out of this number said that India also need 'strong' states

N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

Our sampled MLAs overwhelmingly favoured a strong Central government, a response cutting across parties and states. In Janata Dal-ruled Haryana, 93% said that India needed a strong Centre. In Maharashtra, a Cong.I-ruled state, 95%, in DMK-

<sup>9</sup> Sarkaria Commission Report, p. 175.

ruled Tamilnadu, 97%, in leftist-ruled West Bengal, 96%, and in the BJP-ruled state of Uttar Pradesh, 94% of the MLAs stated that India needed a strong Centre - a qualification was added by 21% of these MLAs that in addition to a strong Centre, strong states were also needed. In other words the Centre-state relations should not be a zero-sum game; one did not have to get power at the other's expense.

Taking all states, nearly all (95%) MLAs stated that India needed a strong Central government. In striking contrast to this overwhelming endorsement of need for a strong Centre, four-fifths of Haryana MLAs felt that Centre-state relations had worsened in recent times. In Maharashtra, the response was divided. Half of the MLAs, across party lines, stated that Centre-state relations had neither deteriorated nor improved, but 43% averred that Centre-state relations had worsened. Counter-intuitively, over one-half of this group (56%) was from the ruling party, Cong.I. Ordinarily, one might expect Cong.I legislators to defend their own party. The blame for deteriorating Centre-state relations is usually placed on the Cong.I, as it has ruled at the Centre for most of India's post-independence history. Even in this Cong.I-ruled state, there was only a token response that Centre-state relations had improved.

In Tamilnadu, 61% of the MLAs said that Centre-state relations had deteriorated in recent years. This response cut across party lines. Interestingly, the marginal 8% response indicating that the relations had become better came from the ruling DMK members, and they all referred to the brief National Front government of V P Singh at the Centre (1989-90) with which DMK was allied. A quarter of the MLAs stated that there was no change in these relations.

In West Bengal, 71% believed that the relations had worsened. Such a response is to be expected in the bastion of leftist movement. But an important comment on this



issue is provided by the fact that over half (56%) of Cong.I MLAs were included in this response. Only 11% of West Bengal MLAs felt that the relations had improved, but 80% of this small group was Cong.I, constituting 44% from among its own ranks. In Uttar Pradesh, 78% stated that the relations were now worse. The balance of 22% said that these were unchanged, and both responses generally cut across party lines.

Taking all states into account, there was a widespread belief that Centre-state relations in India had deteriorated in recent years, with two-thirds of the MLAs subscribing to this view. Only 4% stated that the relationship had improved and a quarter stated that the relations were unchanged.

How much did the MLAs know about the Sarkaria Commission's recommendations? We included this question to establish whether the issue was important enough at the level of ordinary legislators or was it an intra-elite contention highlighted only when it suited the leadership. This is particularly relevant because of the actions of the post-Emergency Janata Party government during 1977-79. Despite their own considerable rhetoric against the use of Article 356 by Mrs. Gandhi's Cong.I, the Janata Party government at the Centre followed exactly the same policy and nine Cong.I state governments were dismissed on the pretext that Cong.I had lost the mandate of the people. Of course, when Mrs. Gandhi returned to power in 1979 she did likewise.<sup>10</sup>

The data on how familiar the MLAs were with the Sarkaria Commission and its recommendations are presented in table XVI.2 below:

---

<sup>10</sup> For details see *President's Rule in States* (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1985)

**Table XVI.2**  
**Knowledge of MLAs**  
**about Sarkaria Commission's Report**

| STATE         | Good/Fair | %   | Little/Sketchy | %   | None | %   |
|---------------|-----------|-----|----------------|-----|------|-----|
| Haryana       | 1         | 7%  |                | 0%  | 14   | 93% |
| Maharashtra   | 4         | 10% |                | 0%  | 38   | 90% |
| TamilNadu     | 9         | 24% | 1              | 3%  | 28   | 74% |
| West Bengal   | 11        | 24% | 10             | 22% | 24   | 53% |
| Uttar Pradesh | 8         | 12% | 12             | 18% | 47   | 70% |
| Total         | 33        | 16% | 23             | 11% | 151  | 73% |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, 93% of the MLAs had no knowledge of Sarkaria Commission's recommendations. Many of the MLAs had not even heard of it. In Maharashtra, this figure was 90%; in Tamilnadu, 74%; in Uttar Pradesh, 70%; and in West Bengal 53% - the smallest proportion among our sampled states. However, this does not mean that the balance of 47% of the West Bengal MLAs had good knowledge of the Sarkaria Commission's report, as 22% MLAs in West Bengal had only a sketchy idea of the Sarkaria Commission; they seemed aware that this was a commission on the question of Centre-state relations and had *some* idea that it was set-up during Mrs. Gandhi's regime, but were ignorant of even its main findings.

Overall, MLAs knew little about the Sarkaria Commission, which might be a good indication that state leadership has used this issue more as a weapon in their conflict with the Centre and that this issue is not of ideological interest. While one might not expect each individual MLA to have read this report, one would expect, certainly from political parties other than Cong.I, that they provide their legislators with a broad idea of the issues at stake if these were considered to be important. The actions of Janata government (1977-79) in dismissing Congress-ruled states probably indicates that elites on each side of the House are willing to use the same weapons which they

condemn as undemocratic and unprincipled when they are in opposition and that the rhetoric is only until such time as they are on opposition benches.

### Views on Centre-state Relations (Party-wise)

The party-wise data on the first two questions are presented in table XVI.3 below:

**Table XVI.3**  
**Views of MLAs regarding Centre-state Relations**  
**(Party-wise)**

| PARTY      | Do we need a strong Centre |      |    |    | Changes in Centre-state relations |     |       |     |      |     |            |     |
|------------|----------------------------|------|----|----|-----------------------------------|-----|-------|-----|------|-----|------------|-----|
|            | Yes                        | %    | No | %  | Better                            | %   | Worse | %   | Same | %   | Don't Know | %   |
| Cong.I     |                            | 100% | 0  | 0% | 2                                 | 4%  | 27    | 52% | 22   | 42% | 1          | 2%  |
| CPI(M)     | 31                         | 94%  | 2  | 6% | 3                                 | 9%  | 24    | 73% | 6    | 18% | 0          | 0%  |
| BJP        | 38                         | 97%  | 1  | 3% | 0                                 | 0%  | 28    | 72% | 10   | 26% | 1          | 3%  |
| DMK        | 18                         | 95%  | 1  | 5% | 3                                 | 16% | 10    | 53% | 4    | 21% | 2          | 11% |
| Janata Dal | 34                         | 92%  | 3  | 8% | 0                                 | 0%  | 28    | 76% | 8    | 22% | 1          | 3%  |
| Total      | 173                        | 96%  | 7  | 4% | 8                                 | 4%  | 117   | 65% | 50   | 28% | 5          | 3%  |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

In keeping with the state-wise profile above, an overwhelming response from the MLAs of all five parties favoured a strong central government. The proportion of response ranged from an understandable 100% from Cong.I, to a relatively counter-intuitive and near total 95% and 94% from DMK and CPI(M) respectively. Janata Dal at 92% was the lowest among all parties. This certainly demonstrated a feeling on the part of MLAs that without a strong central authority, the very survival of India could be at stake.

On the next question, pertaining to recent changes in Centre-state relations, there was a generally negative response. Half of Cong.I and DMK MLAs said that the relations between the Centre and the states had worsened in the recent past, whereas among MLAs of the other three parties three-quarters responded that Centre-state relations

had worsened in recent years - CPI(M) 73 %, BJP 72 %, and Janata Dal 76 %. Clearly, the general perception of the legislators, including the members of the main ruling party at the Centre, was that the Centre-state relations had worsened in the last two decades.

#### **Knowledge of Sarkaria Commission's report (Party-wise)**

The party-wise data are presented in table XVI.4 below.

**Table XVI.4**  
**Knowledge of Sarkaria Commission Report**  
**(Party-wise)**

| <b>PARTY</b> | <b>Yes</b> | <b>%</b>    | <b>No</b>  | <b>%</b>    | <b>Sketchy</b> | <b>%</b>    |
|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| Cong.I       | 7          | 13 %        | 43         | 83 %        | 2              | 4 %         |
| CPI(M)       | 8          | 24 %        | 19         | 58 %        | 6              | 18 %        |
| BJP          | 6          | 15 %        | 27         | 69 %        | 6              | 15 %        |
| DMK          | 3          | 16 %        | 16         | 84 %        | 0              | 0 %         |
| Janata Dal   | 3          | 8 %         | 28         | 76 %        | 6              | 16 %        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>27</b>  | <b>15 %</b> | <b>133</b> | <b>74 %</b> | <b>20</b>      | <b>11 %</b> |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

In general we found that a vast majority of the MLAs had little or no knowledge of the Sarkaria Commission's findings. Many of the MLAs had not even heard of it. In Cong.I, the ratio of MLAs who had no knowledge of the Sarkaria Commission, leave alone its findings, was 83 %; for CPI(M), a comparatively better informed party, this proportion was still 58 %; in the BJP, 69 %; in DMK a hefty 84 %; and in Janata Dal 76 %, making an overall average of 74 % from these five parties.

This appears to indicate that the issue reflects intra-elite conflict at the level of leadership rather than a broad-based dissatisfaction with Centre-state relations as, a) none of the parties has attempted to mobilise opinion even within its own party ranks, and b) the two parties which have ruled at the Centre have followed the same policies.

## XVII. VIEWS ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION

The term *National Integration* is used in India to refer to the problem of horizontal integration of different religious, linguistic, and ethnic groups, mainly signifying concern with communal and separatist tendencies. The partition of India in 1947, and the extreme violence that went with it, made the leadership wary of almost any pluralist tendency. This is what probably accounted for the fact that while drafting the constitution there was a bias towards a strong Centre.<sup>1</sup> It is also related to the fact that although the Congress party (1920) resolved that the federal set-up of India would be along linguistic lines, it delayed drawing linguistic boundaries once it assumed power, in the light of anxieties on linguistic diversity as a possible basis of separatism.<sup>2</sup>

While there has always been a clear recognition of India's diversity, it has been matched by concern for an "Indian" identity. The slogan "unity in diversity" was coined in early years of Indian independence.<sup>3</sup> This concern has increased in recent years, as India has seen separatist movements in Punjab, Kashmir and the North-east, and, the issue of Ayodhya mosque has created new tensions in the delicate balance of Hindu-Muslim relations. The question of national integration is therefore once again on the main political agenda.

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, B P Barua, *Politics and Constitution-Making in India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep, 1984)

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter I

<sup>3</sup> The early attempts at tackling this issue resulted in a National Integration Conference in 1961 which established the National Integration Council. The initial membership of NIC was 39 which included the Prime Minister, Union Home minister, and the Chief Ministers of States. The NIC has continued to this date though to varying levels of activity. See D C Gupta, *Indian Government and Politics* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1982)

With this background, we investigated MLAs' views on this issue. We did so by formulating three questions, one each related to the perceived role that religion, language and politics played in national integration.

#### **ROLE OF RELIGION IN NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

We started this enquiry by asking, "How strongly would you agree or disagree that religion hinders national integration?" We also asked MLAs to place their views on a ten-point intensity scale, 1 mild to 10 strong. The response on this scale enabled us to compute two indices for the purposes of comparison: first, an **average intensity** of response and, second, an **index**. This investigation is to be viewed against the background of recent communal disturbances in India: there were two religion-based secessionist movements, Sikhs in Punjab and the Muslims in Kashmir; and the Ayodhya mosque issue between the hard-line Hindus and Muslims which helped BJP, riding on the *hindutva* wave, to win elections in India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh.<sup>4</sup> During the period of our field work the Ayodhya issue was leading to mounting tensions between Hindus and Muslims. As events turned out, the mosque was destroyed later in 1992, resulting in some of the worst communal riots in several states. The response of the MLAs to our question is presented in table XVI.1 below:

---

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter III

**Table XVII.1**  
**Views on National Integration**  
**(Role of Religion)**

| STATES           | Does religion hinder National Integration? |     | % of sample 'Yes' | % 7 & above on 10 point scale |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------|-------------------------------|
|                  | Yes                                        | No  |                   |                               |
| Haryana          | 4                                          | 11  | 27%               | 13%                           |
| Maharashtra      | 25                                         | 17  | 60%               | 33%                           |
| Tamilnadu        | 20                                         | 18  | 53%               | 32%                           |
| West Bengal      | 31                                         | 14  | 69%               | 53%                           |
| Uttar Pradesh    | 23                                         | 44  | 34%               | 24%                           |
| Total All States | 103                                        | 104 | 50%               | 33%                           |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

Haryana MLAs generally disagreed with the view that religion hindered national integration. Only 27% of the MLAs agreed and half of these had a fairly moderate response intensity of 4 on our ten-point scale. The remainder - only 13% of the total - had high intensity scores of 7 or above. The average intensity was 6.25<sup>5</sup>. Haryana's score on the index was 1.67.<sup>6</sup>

In Maharashtra, a majority of 60% of the MLAs believed that religion hindered national integration and over half of these MLAs (56%) put their response high on the intensity scale at 7 or above. The resultant average intensity was 7.08 and Maharashtra scored a relatively high 4.21 on the index. Clearly, there was a relatively stronger feeling that religion interfered with the process of national integration in India.

---

<sup>5</sup> The average intensity is computed by multiplying the number of MLAs by their intensity of response. For example, in the case of Haryana, 1 MLA placed his response at 9. Multiplying the two we obtain a total of 9. Similarly, the other two "yes" responses give us a total of 16 (8+8). The sum of this aggregated intensity is 25. Divided by the number who said "yes" (4), we get an average intensity of 6.25.

<sup>6</sup> The index of response was created by multiplying the number of MLAs with the intensity of their response, and then dividing the result by the total sample from the state irrespective of their response being "yes" or "no". To provide example from Haryana again, we divide the total of their intensity of response (25) by the total sample from the state (15). This gives us an index of 1.67.

In Tamilnadu, again a majority (53%) believed that religion hindered national integration, and of this group 60% were on the high intensity level of 7 or above. The balance of 47% disagreed. This response pattern resulted in an average intensity of **6.95** and an index of **3.66**.

In West Bengal, over two-thirds ((69%) - the highest percentage from among our states - responded that religion hindered national integration and over three-quarters of these (77%) were 7 or above on the intensity scale. As a proportion of the total sample from West Bengal, this group with a high intensity of response accounted for over half (53%). This indicated a strong feeling on this issue. It translated into an average intensity of **7.77** and a high **5.35** on our index.

In Uttar Pradesh, as in Haryana, a lower proportion (34%) of MLAs agreed that religion hindered national integration, and two-thirds disagreed. As most of those who agreed displayed a high intensity, the average intensity was **7.78** but UP's index was a low **2.67**.

Overall, opinion was divided. In three states namely, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, and West Bengal, a majority felt that religion hindered national integration, while Haryana and UP had a majority who did not agree. Two-thirds of the MLAs in the former group had an intensity of 7 or above on the scale, indicating a generally strong opinion when it existed. Ranking the states in terms of their score on our index of response: West Bengal scored **5.35**, Maharashtra **4.21**, Tamilnadu **4.21**, Uttar Pradesh **2.67**, and, Haryana **1.67**.

This not only highlights the higher sensitivity to the communal issues in West Bengal, but also illustrates the gap between the two Northern states and the others. Communal



problems are mainly concentrated in northern part of India. Haryana's neighbour Punjab and further north Kashmir have had religion-based separatist movements. Uttar Pradesh has the largest Muslim population in India and it has been the scene of some of the worst communal riots in the country and in any case, the BJP had won elections in UP riding on the Ayodhya issue (see Chapter III). Intuitively one might have expected these two states to show a higher concern on communal issues. However, both the states displayed a lower sensitivity to religious cleavages.

### Role of Religion in National Integration (Party-wise)

The party-wise analysis is presented in table XVI.2 below:

**Table XVII.2**  
**Views on National Integration**  
**Role of Religion**  
**(Party-wise)**

| PARTY             | Does religion hinder<br>National Integration |    | Percent<br>of sample<br>'Yes' | Percent 7 &<br>above on 10<br>point scale |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
|                   | Yes                                          | No |                               |                                           |
| Cong.I            | 29                                           | 23 | 56%                           | 35%                                       |
| CPI(M)            | 24                                           | 9  | 73%                           | 61%                                       |
| BJP               | 5                                            | 34 | 13%                           | 3%                                        |
| DMK               | 13                                           | 6  | 68%                           | 37%                                       |
| Janata Dal        | 20                                           | 17 | 54%                           | 38%                                       |
| Total All Parties | 91                                           | 89 | 51%                           | 33%                                       |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

A majority of MLAs from Cong.I (56%) replied that religion hindered national integration. Almost two-thirds (62%) of this group put the intensity of their response at 7 or above, with an average intensity of **7.45** and an index score of **4.17**.

Among the CPI(M) MLAs, a much larger proportion (73%) expressed the view that religion hindered national integration, and 83% of these MLAs put their response at 7 or above on our intensity scale with an average intensity of **8.12**. On our index, the CPI(M) scored **5.93**.

In the BJP, 87% took the opposite stand and disagreed that religion hindered National Integration. Of the 13% who agreed, 60% put their response at 7 or above on our scale, giving an average intensity of **6.0**. On our index, however, BJP scored a small **0.78** - the lowest among all the parties. The MLAs from BJP did not believe that the mobilization strategy of their own party was in any way communal.

From DMK, over two-thirds of MLAs (68%) believed that religion hindered national integration and just over half (54%) of this group put their response at an intensity of 7 or above. The average intensity was **6.69**, and DMK's score on the index was **4.55**.

For Janata Dal, half (54%) of the MLAs agreed that religion hindered national integration. Of these 70% put their response at 7 or above, resulting in an average intensity of response of **7.6** and an index of **4.10**.

Taking all parties into account, the index ranks were: CPI(M) **5.93**, DMK **4.55**, Cong.I **4.17**, Janata Dal **4.10**, and BJP **0.78**. This appears to indicate that even though BJP's current strategy for political mobilization has, knowingly or not, taken religious overtones, most of its legislators do not believe that religion has become a dividing force in contemporary India.

#### **ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

The linguistic diversity of India may be illustrated by the fact that there are a total of 106 recognised languages, each spoken by over 10,000 persons (Census of India, 1981). However, 95 percent of the Indian population speaks one of the fifteen

languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.<sup>7</sup> This apart, although state boundaries in India were drawn on linguistic basis, there are substantial intra-state linguistic minorities. This may be observed from the fact that the electoral rolls of different constituencies in some states had as many as four to five languages between them.<sup>8</sup>

The Constitution of India designated Hindi as the official language of the Union but it stated that “English shall be used for a period of fifteen years”.<sup>9</sup> The Southern states, particularly Tamilnadu, were always uncomfortable with this policy, which led Nehru to make a statement in Parliament on 7 August 1959 that English would continue to be used, even after 1965, as an associate official language until such time as non-Hindi speaking people desired.<sup>10</sup> However, after the expiry of 15 years in 1965 when Hindi became the official language, it led to extensive linguistic riots in the state of Tamilnadu. Two Tamil Congress ministers resigned from the Union cabinet on the language issue.<sup>11</sup> As a consequence, the government of India was forced to amend the Official Languages Act to continue use of English almost indefinitely.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Originally these were Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. Sindhi was added in 1967.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Maharashtra had four: Marathi, Kannada, Urdu, and English; and, Tamilnadu had five: Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and English. See S L Shakdhar, *The Law and Practice of Elections in India* (New Delhi: National Publishing, 1992) pp. 101-106.

<sup>9</sup> Article 343 of the Constitution of India.

<sup>10</sup> Cited in J R Siwach, *Dynamics of Indian Government and Politics*, Revised edition, (New Delhi: Sterling, 1990) p.682

<sup>11</sup> S Ramachandran (Ed.), *Anna Speaks: At the Rajya Sabha 1962-66* (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1975) p. 77

<sup>12</sup> The 1967 amendment to the Official Languages Act reads, “The use of English language will continue until resolutions for the discontinuance of the use of the English Language have been passed by the Legislatures of all the States which have not adopted Hindi as their Official language, and until after considering the resolutions aforesaid, a resolution for such discontinuance has been passed by each House of Parliament”. Cited in J R Siwach, *Dynamics of Indian Government and Politics* op. cit., p. 683

Many in Tamilnadu have viewed Hindi as a symbol of North Indian domination and have shown concern about what they believe would be the loss of equal opportunities for the regional languages.<sup>13</sup> As late as 1986, the Tamilnadu assembly passed a resolution requesting the Centre that English alone should be the declared the official language and Hindi should only be an official language like any other regional language.<sup>14</sup>

In our sampled five states, representing as they do four regions of India, four main languages are spoken: Hindi (Haryana and UP), Marathi (Maharashtra), Bengali (West Bengal), and Tamil (Tamilnadu). This setting prompted our second set of questions on the theme of national integration, and we enquired of the MLAs whether they believed that the existence of so many different languages hindered national integration in India. Their response is presented in table XVI.3 below:

**Table XVII.3**  
**Views on National Integration**  
**(Role of Language)**

| STATES               | Does Language hinder National Integration? |     | % of sample 'Yes' | % 7 & above on 10 point scale |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------|-------------------------------|
|                      | Yes                                        | No  |                   |                               |
| Haryana              | 5                                          | 10  | 33%               | 13%                           |
| Maharashtra          | 9                                          | 33  | 21%               | 2%                            |
| Tamilnadu            | 20                                         | 18  | 53%               | 21%                           |
| West Bengal          | 15                                         | 30  | 33%               | 2%                            |
| Uttar Pradesh        | 20                                         | 47  | 30%               | 7%                            |
| Total for All States | 69                                         | 138 | 33%               | 9%                            |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, one-third of the MLAs (33%) said that language hindered national integration in India while two-thirds disagreed. Of the MLAs in the former group,

<sup>13</sup> Jyotindra Das Gupta, *Language Conflict and National Development: Group Politics and National Language Policy in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970)

<sup>14</sup> See J R Siwach, *Dynamics of Indian Government and Politics* op. cit., p. 685

40% placed the intensity of their view at 7 on our intensity scale. This meant an average intensity of **6.2** and Haryana's index at **2.07**.

In Maharashtra, an even lower proportion (21 %) felt that language hampered national integration and only 11 % out of this small group put the intensity of their feeling at 7 on our scale and none above 7. Four-fifths stated that language did not hinder national integration in any way. This pattern placed Maharashtra's average intensity at **4.78** and its index at **1.02**, the lowest among our sample states.

By contrast and expectedly, in Tamilnadu a majority (53 %) stated that language was indeed an obstacle in the way of national integration, and 40 % of the MLAs who held this view held it with a high intensity of 7 or above. The important point to note, however, is that the other half of the sample (47 %) did not agree that language came in the way of national integration. This is not consistent with Tamilnadu's image of intense opposition to Hindi that has been displayed in the political arena so far. In fact, even taking other southern states into account, the opposition to Hindi has not been displayed so intensely elsewhere. In this sense the language issue in Tamilnadu appears to have served, in the words of Das Gupta, as a "political role-sign for mobilization than as a symbol of primordial loyalty".<sup>15</sup>

The ruling DMK MLAs had strong feelings on the issue, and half of those who agreed had an intensity of 7 or above on our scale. The corresponding figure for the opposition was only 25 %. This response pattern gave Tamilnadu an average intensity of **6.30** on this issue and an index score of **3.32**.

---

<sup>15</sup> Jyotindra Das Gupta, *Language Conflict and National Development* op. cit., p. 265

In West Bengal, we were back to a minority (33%) who felt that language hampered national integration and most said so with a low intensity. West Bengal's average intensity was **4.73** and its score on our index was a low **1.58**.

In UP, only 30% stated that language hindered national integration, while 70% took the opposite stand. Of those who said "yes", only 25% had an intensity of 7 or above. The average intensity of response came to **5.75** and its index score was only marginally higher than West Bengal at **1.72**.

Overall, there was generally a weak response that language stood in the way of national integration. Even those who agreed demonstrated a generally weak intensity of feeling. Given the background of the anti-Hindi movement in Tamilnadu, the surprise was that almost one-half (47%) of the MLAs, split almost equally between the ranks of the ruling and the opposition, expressed the view that language did not come in the way of national integration. The states were ranked as follows on our index of response: Tamilnadu **3.32**, Haryana **2.07**, Uttar Pradesh **1.72**, West Bengal **1.58**, and Maharashtra **1.02**.

#### **Role of Language in National Integration (Party-wise)**

The Party-wise data are presented in table XVI.4 below:

**Table XVII.4**  
**Views on National Integration**  
**(Role of Language)**  
**(Party-wise)**

| PARTY                 | Does language hinder National Integration? |     | Percent of sample 'Yes' | Percent 7 & above on 10 point scale |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                       | Yes                                        | No  |                         |                                     |
| Cong.I                | 18                                         | 34  | 35%                     | 6%                                  |
| CPI(M)                | 12                                         | 21  | 36%                     | 3%                                  |
| BJP                   | 7                                          | 32  | 18%                     | 5%                                  |
| DMK                   | 7                                          | 12  | 37%                     | 53%                                 |
| Janata Dal            | 13                                         | 24  | 35%                     | 8%                                  |
| Total for All Parties | 57                                         | 123 | 32%                     | 11%                                 |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

In Cong.I, about one-third of the MLAs (35%) believed that language hindered national integration, while the balance of two-thirds disagreed. Of the MLAs who belonged to the former group, only 17% placed the intensity of their view at 7 on our 10-point scale. This pattern gave Cong.I an average intensity of **5.28** and a score of **1.85** on the index.

Among CPI(M) MLAs, a similar 36% agreed, 64% did not. Of MLAs in the former group, only 8% placed their view above 7 on the scale, resulting in average intensity of **5.08** and an index of **1.83**, just a shade lower than Cong.I.

From BJP, only 18% of the MLAs agreed that language was a hindrance to national integration. Of this small proportion 29% put their response at 7 or above, giving us an intensity of **5.71**. The index was **1.03**, much lower than both Cong.I and CPI(M).

DMK presented a contrast. A majority (58%) said that language was a barrier to national integration and 54% of this number put the intensity of their response at 7 or above. The resultant average intensity of **6.82** was the highest among our sample

states. DMK also scored **3.95** on the index, which placed it way above the other parties. The fact that the second rank was a distant **1.91** (Janata Dal) appears to indicate that DMK are quite isolated on this question; but, of course, the other parties are mainly represented in states whose languages are the *Indo-Aryan* family of languages, as opposed to the *Dravidian* family of languages in the South.

With Janata Dal we are back to the pattern of response seen in Cong.I and CPI(M). Just over a third of the Janata Dal MLAs agreed that language was a barrier to national integration while a majority of 65% took the opposite stand. Of those who belonged to the former category, 23% put their response at 7 or above, giving us an average intensity of **5.46**. On the index Janata Dal scored **1.91**.

Taking all parties into account, there was a weak response to the suggestion that language stood in the way of national integration. Even those who agreed demonstrated a generally weak intensity of feeling. The index ranking of various parties was as follows, DMK **3.95**, Janata Dal **1.91**, Cong.I **1.85**, CPI(M) **1.83**, and BJP **1.03**.

## **ROLE OF POLITICS IN NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

In the last forty years, Indian polity has become increasingly participant. However, political development has not kept pace with the increasing numbers who have become aware of their political rights.<sup>16</sup> Post-Independence India has displayed centralising and personalising tendencies at the cost of building and nurturing strong political institutions. This fact, together with the many serious cleavages that exist in the Indian society, creates an opportunity for political groups to convert the

---

<sup>16</sup> We define political development in Samuel Huntington's terms of political institutionalisation. See, 'Political Development and Political Decay' *World Politics*, XVII, April 1965.



dissatisfaction with economic development, income distribution, and administrative apathy into a support for regional, linguistic, communal or ethnic loyalties. Often mass protests are mobilised around these cleavages by a combination of populist and parochial politics.<sup>17</sup>

There have been several groups and political parties that have based themselves on communal and/or regional chauvinism. The communal connotations of the Muslim league, Akali Dal, Hindu Mahasabha, and Jamat-e-Islami are quite obvious and regional chauvinism has been seen in parties such as DMK and the Gurkha League. Not all of these may have presented a direct threat to national integration, but not all their activities have been conducive to it. The bigger problem is that India's main political party the Cong.I has been often perceived to have aligned itself with communal or separatist forces to win elections.<sup>18</sup> Recent events have shown that politicians and political parties have not shied away from following divisive policies in the pursuit of electoral gains.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, our last question on national integration enquired whether the way in which politics was being conducted in India hindered national integration. The response of MLAs is presented in table XVI.5 below:

---

<sup>17</sup> Francine Frankel, *India's Political Economy 1947-1977: The Gradual Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978) p.341

<sup>18</sup> As in the case of Cong.I alliance with Tripura Upjati Juba Samiti in Tripura (1988) or with Muslim League in Kerala (1969) both against the leftist parties.

<sup>19</sup> Some specific cases in point would be Mrs. Gandhi's protection of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala in Punjab, V P Singh's attempt to implement the Mandal Commission's recommendations, and BJP's concentration on the Ayodhya mosque.

**Table XVII.5**  
**Views on National Integration**  
**(Role of Politics)**

| STATE                | Does Politics hinder National Integration |    | % of sample 'Yes' | % 7 & above on 10 point scale |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------|----|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Haryana              | 15                                        | 0  | 100%              | 93%                           |
| Maharashtra          | 40                                        | 2  | 95%               | 83%                           |
| Tamilnadu            | 29                                        | 9  | 76%               | 53%                           |
| West Bengal          | 38                                        | 7  | 84%               | 64%                           |
| Uttar Pradesh        | 54                                        | 13 | 81%               | 60%                           |
| Total for all States | 176                                       | 31 | 85%               | 67%                           |

Note: N = Haryana 15, Maharashtra 42, Tamilnadu 38, West Bengal 45, Uttar Pradesh 67 and Total 207.

In Haryana, the immediate and overwhelming response from all MLAs (100%) was a resounding “yes”. In addition, 93% of these MLAs put their response at 7 or above on the intensity scale - 60% putting it at 10, the maximum. This response pattern not only gave Haryana an average intensity of response at a high **9.0**, but it also placed its index at **9.0** - the highest among all states.

In Maharashtra, we again got “yes” from 95% of the MLAs. 83% of the sample placed their response at 7 or higher on the scale and 38% were at the maximum 10. Maharashtra’s average intensity of response was **8.60** and its index **8.19**.

In Tamilnadu the response was somewhat diluted, but we still had a big majority of 76% who said “yes” and 69% of these placed the intensity of their response at 7 or higher, 27% being at the maximum 10. This pattern resulted in average intensity of **7.79** and an index score of **6.51**.

In West Bengal 84% of the MLAs endorsed the view that the conduct of politics hindered national integration, and 44% of these put their response at 9 or 10 on the

scale. Overall 64% put the intensity of their response at 7 or higher. The average intensity of response for West Bengal was **7.71** and its score on the index was **6.51**.

In UP, 81% of the MLAs said that politics hampered national integration and 28% put their response at 10 on the scale. Overall 60% of the Uttar Pradesh MLAs placed their response at 7 or above. This response computes to an average intensity of **8.06** and an index score of **6.49**.

Taking all states into account, this is an astonishing response, coming as it does from politicians themselves. Over 85% of the MLAs of all the states asserted that politics hindered national integration. These findings offer a compelling reason to consider serious reforms to the Indian political order, because, as politicians, the MLAs should know. The ranking of the states on our index is as follows: Haryana **9.0**, Maharashtra **8.19**, West Bengal **6.51**, Uttar Pradesh **6.49**, and Tamilnadu **5.95**.

For all states together, the following table XVI.6 represents the indices of their response to the three questions pertaining to religion, language, and politics.

**Table XVII.6**  
**Indices of Response**  
**on National Integration**  
**by MLAs from the five states**

| State            | INDICES OF RESPONSE |             |             |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                  | Religion            | Language    | Politics    |
| 1. HARYANA       | 1.67                | 2.07        | <b>9.00</b> |
| 2. MAHARASHTRA   | 4.21                | 1.02        | 8.19        |
| 3. TAMILNADU     | 3.66                | <b>3.32</b> | 5.95        |
| 4. WEST BENGAL   | <b>5.35</b>         | 1.58        | 6.51        |
| 5. UTTAR PRADESH | 2.67                | 1.72        | <b>6.49</b> |

Note: Max. Score = 10. Highest score for each issue is in bold

The most important factor that emerges from the above analysis is that the lowest index-score on the question of whether the conduct of politics in India is an obstacle to national integration (5.95), is still higher than the highest index-score for any of the other questions. This response, coming as it does from the MLAs, conveys a great deal about the declining political culture in India. This analysis also highlights the difference between these five states on how they view different problems. Haryana leads in its concern about the conduct of politics, West Bengal on communalism, and Tamilnadu on language.

### Role of Politics in National Integration (Party-wise)

The Party-wise data are presented in table XVI.7 below:

**Table XVII.7**  
**Views on National Integration**  
**(Role of Politics)**  
**(Party-wise)**

| PARTY                 | Does politics hinder<br>National Integration |    | Percent<br>of sample<br>'Yes' | Percent 7 &<br>above on 10<br>point scale |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
|                       | Yes                                          | No |                               |                                           |
| Cong.I                | 47                                           | 5  | 90%                           | 67%                                       |
| CPI(M)                | 28                                           | 5  | 85%                           | 67%                                       |
| BJP                   | 35                                           | 4  | 89%                           | 77%                                       |
| DMK                   | 12                                           | 7  | 63%                           | 42%                                       |
| Janata Dal            | 28                                           | 9  | 76%                           | 65%                                       |
| Total for All Parties | 150                                          | 30 | 83%                           | 66%                                       |

Note: N = Cong.I 52; CPI(M) 33; BJP 39; DMK 19; Janata Dal 37; and Total 180.

From Cong.I, an overwhelming majority (90%) responded with a resounding "yes" to this question. In addition, 75% of this group put their response at 7 or above, a quarter at the maximum of 10. The average intensity was 8.11 and the index a high 7.11. This compares interestingly with its index of response for religion at 4.17 and for language at 1.85. Considering that this response came from members of state level

political elites, it certainly provides us with an insight into the world of Indian politics.

A similar ratio of 85% from the CPI(M) stated that politics hindered national integration. Of those who subscribed to this view, two-thirds (67%) placed their response at an intensity of 7 or higher, giving an average intensity for CPI(M) at **7.89**. On the index CPI(M) scored **6.70**, compared with its index of response for religion at **5.93**, and for language at **1.83**.

Like Cong.I, the BJP had an overwhelming 90% who said that politics hindered national integration, and 86% of these MLAs placed their response at 7 or higher on the scale. This resulted in an average intensity of **8.60**. On the index, BJP scored the highest at **7.72**. Compare this with its index for religion at **0.78**, and for language at **1.03**.

From DMK, 63% agreed that politics hindered national integration. Of this proportion, 67% placed their response at 7 or above, with an average intensity of **7.58** for DMK. On the index DMK scored **4.79**. For comparison, its index on the other two issues was: religion **4.55** and language **3.95**.

In Janata Dal, 76% believed that politics hindered national integration. Of this proportion, 86% placed their response at 7 or above on the scale, giving an average intensity of **8.86** for the Janata Dal MLAs. Janata Dal scored **6.70** on the index. By comparison its index on religion was **4.10** and language **1.91**.

The following table XVI.8 summarises the indices of their response to each of these questions indicating the way the five parties think and conduct themselves.

**Table XVII.8**  
**Indices of Response**  
**on National Integration**  
**MLAs from the five political parties**

| Party         | INDICES OF RESPONSE |             |             |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
|               | Religion            | Language    | Politics    |
| 1. Cong.I     | 4.17                | 1.85        | 7.33        |
| 2. CPI(M)     | <b>5.93</b>         | 1.83        | <b>6.70</b> |
| 3. BJP        | 0.78                | 1.03        | <b>7.72</b> |
| 4. DMK        | 4.55                | <b>3.95</b> | 4.79        |
| 5. Janata Dal | 4.10                | 1.91        | <b>6.70</b> |

Note: Max. score = 10. Highest score on each issue is in bold

The highest score on our index for all the parties, including CPI(M) is on their response to the question whether politics hinders national integration. Coming from the politicians themselves, these responses appear to establish that the shape political activities have assumed in India is poor and divisive. Apart from being a stark comment on Indian politics, the above indices also illuminate the differential emphasis political parties place on vital national issues. The CPI(M) stands out for its concern with communal problems which it sees as a hindrance to national integration, while the DMK highlights language as a barrier to national integration. BJP tops the list for its concern with the way politics is conducted in India. But all parties believe that most of all this last issue has become detrimental to national integration.

## XVIII. CONCLUSION

In this thesis we have postulated that the MLAs occupy a strategic position not only in state-level politics, but also in India's national political arrangements. In this populous sub-continent of over 844 million people (1991),<sup>1</sup> democracy is ultimately articulated by 545 MPs in the Lok Sabha and some 4000 MLAs in their respective State Assemblies. The complex plurality of India, supplemented by the nature of its 'quasi-federal' constitution,<sup>2</sup> which divides powers between the Centre and the States, suggests that the MLAs, due to their potential ability to contributing (or otherwise) to the political stability of India, may be politically at least as important as the MPs.

State-level politics is closer to people, concerned, as it is, with state-level institutions and bureaucracy that people have to routinely deal with. The real contact of masses with the administration is mainly through intermediaries, of which these state-level political elites are a critical component. The MLAs, as a result of being able to mediate between State administration and the people, can become, irrespective of their success in obtaining benefits for the people, a kind of 'safety-valve' that assists in preventing societal pressure from building up to dangerous levels.

This apart, India's provincial legislators are crucial to political processes in the country in other ways. They not only provide 'legitimacy' to State-level regimes but more importantly, they are "politically bilingual" thus constituting a communication linkage between the largely 'modern' national elite at the apex and the 'traditional'

---

<sup>1</sup> Census of India 1991 (provisional figures)

<sup>2</sup> K C Wheare, *Modern Constitutions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) p. 21. He labels the Indian constitution as 'quasi-federal', as it is perceived to have strong unitary tendencies.

masses at the base of the society. This latent 'integrative' function suggests that potentially the MLAs can critically help or hinder India's political stability. In this concluding chapter, we shall first summarise the principal findings from our empirical data, and then, in the light of the above, comment on their implications.

## Summary

Our analysis of MLAs brings certain sharp tendencies into focus. It reaffirms the findings of other individual state studies that these provincial legislators are an elite group in terms of their education and residence.<sup>3</sup> They are certainly not a microcosm of the people they represent. Over two-thirds (70%) of our sample were graduates - in a country that has 57% illiteracy.<sup>4</sup> Most were resident in urban areas - in a country which is 74% rural.<sup>5</sup> Among our sample of five states (over 42% of India's population, 1991), West Bengal had the highest proportion of MLAs who were resident in a rural area, but most were not agriculturists, which reinforces the argument that CPI(M)'s political strategy was to concentrate on recruiting university level students with rural roots. Once recruited, the party made it attractive for them to go back to rural areas by, directly or indirectly, employing many as teachers and offering them panchayat and party positions.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, P D Sharma, *Legislative Elite in India* op.cit.; Richard Sisson & Lawrence Shrader, 'Social Representation and Political Integration in an Indian State: The Legislative Dimension', in Albert Eldridge (Ed.) *Legislatures in Plural Societies* op.cit.; I N Tewary, *State Politics in India* op.cit.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Census of India, 1991 (provisional figures)

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter III



Although the occupation for the largest proportion was agriculture, a relatively large number had no occupation except “full time politics”. In a study of Bihar,<sup>7</sup> one of India’s large States bordering on both UP and West Bengal, Jha noted that in a short period of seven years the “politics only” occupation increased almost sixfold from 7% to 41%.<sup>8</sup> Some might argue that this is a reflection of politics progressively becoming a lucrative ‘career’ which promises easy pickings in a land of scarcity and deprivation. On the other hand, employment prospects in the rural hinterland are poor, and those who enter politics may not necessarily have had a choice of any other occupation. Our fieldwork tends to favour the former interpretation, as does the fact that state politics is increasingly seen to be criminalised. In a recent editorial, *The Indian Express* noted that as many as one-third of UP’s legislators had a criminal record (see Chapter XIII). In Maharashtra, during local elections in March 1992, it was reported that a record number of candidates who had criminal records were recruited by all parties.<sup>9</sup> The practice of inducting such elements is not limited to any particular state or a particular party. In varying degrees, all parties have played by the same rules.<sup>10</sup>

It would be invidious to suggest that all MLAs who were in “full-time politics” were involved in criminal activities. The point is that the system tacitly *permits* an increasing number of opportunists who use politics to further their own personal

---

<sup>7</sup> Bihar is a large State in the Hindi heartland with a population of 86.3 million (Source 1991 Census). It is also a State where most political parties have recruited candidates with criminal records (See *India Today*, March 15, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Dayadhar Jha, *State Legislature in India: Legislature in Indian Political System* op.cit.

<sup>9</sup> See Vir Chopra, ‘The Imperative of Reform’ in Subash Kashyap (Ed.), *Reforming the Constitution* (New Delhi: UBSPD, 1992) pp. 235-260. See also *India Today*, March 15, 1990 for a special report on Bihar MLAs.

<sup>10</sup> For example, *India Today*, April 30, 1993 noted that the recent electoral victory of CPI(M) in Tripura (1993) was mainly due to a high proportion of Cong.I MLAs having criminal records, constant gang wars and rampant corruption by the Cong.I politicians. p. 14

interests and, in States such as Bihar, they also use their political immunity to run a whole gamut of criminal activities. However, a clear exception was the cadre-based CPI(M) where “full-time politics” generally meant genuine full-time party work.

What motivates these provincial politicians to embrace political careers? There was no overwhelming reason why MLAs entered politics, but most (72 %) were covered by the two categories of ‘Personal disposition’ and ‘Family/Group/Leader influence’. In West Bengal, where the dominance of leftist ideology might intuitively be expected to provide a more ideological emphasis, it was particularly surprising to find that the State had the largest proportion (27 %) of MLAs among all States, who had entered politics due to their family background. This supports the view that West Bengal politics has been dominated by the *bhadralok*.<sup>11</sup> Most political recruitment appears to be from *within*.

An important function of the legislators, i.e., their activity inside the House, had a generally low rating from most legislators. They put a low value on their speaking in the assembly, on the quality of answers from the ruling parties to questions posed, and on their work in various legislative committees. In some ways, it goes to show that Indian state legislatures have become marginal to the Executive. The logic of why this may be so is not difficult to discern. Politics in India, both at the Centre and at state-level, has revolved around popular leaders. The institutional capacity of the Indian State to curb the power of personalities has been minimal. Atul Kohli argues that this particular trait results from “the overall design by which leaders have made democracy a gift to the society.”<sup>12</sup> In a top-down operation of the democratic

---

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter IV.

<sup>12</sup> Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent* op.cit., p. 390

system, the notion of bottom-up accountability is too weak to be of any serious consequence. One of the consequences of such a culture is that the Chief Ministers of states are very powerful while they are in office, even though they generally preside over a potentially unstable government. In the process of following their own agenda, they marginalise the assembly which leaves a typical MLA with little meaningful work. In Bihar, for example, between 1967 and 1982, the number of acts passed by the House was only 206 (an average of 14 per year), in comparison to 2024 ordinances which, as *faits accomplis*, were to be ratified by the legislature at a later date.<sup>13</sup>

Poor institutionalisation of the state assembly has meant that state-level politics is conducted on a personality basis. This creates a political structure which is, paradoxically, both strong and weak. While a Chief Minister enjoys personal popularity, his government and his party look formidable but, metaphorically speaking, this can change overnight as “the same solid block which signs up for a Chief Minister will as solidly reverse the stand”.<sup>14</sup> Political parties, by the loss of one leader, crash from big majorities to marginal presence in the assembly, as in the recent case of AIADMK in Tamilnadu.<sup>15</sup>

The Indian MLAs do not fit into the customary conceptualizations of the legislative theory. We have observed that the legislative literature suffers from ethnocentrism as

---

<sup>13</sup> Cited in James Manor, ‘The State of Governance’ in Roy and James (Eds.) *Foundations of India’s Political Economy* (New Delhi: Sage, 1992) p. 52

<sup>14</sup> Rajni Kothari, *State against Democracy: In Search of Humane Governance* (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1988) p. 287

<sup>15</sup> After the passing away of its charismatic Chief Minister, MGR, AIADMK’s strength in the Assembly declined from 133 seats in 1984 to 27 in 1989. These 27 seats were won by the Jayalalitha-led front, a splinter group as a result of infighting in AIADMK after MGR passed away. The other faction, led by MGR’s wife, won 5 seats.

the bulk of it is limited to the USA, and to UK and West European democracies rendering its application to developing countries difficult. More importantly, even within the developing countries, India is *sui generis* making generalisations based on most legislative literature even more hazardous. In conceptualising the role orientation of legislators, Wahlke et al. concentrated on *purposive* and *representational* roles. We have argued that Indian state-level legislators do not adequately fit into the Wahlke et al. typology of trustee, delegate or politico, or indeed into the purposive role categories of ritualist, tribune, inventor, broker and opportunist. The main emphases in an MLA's role orientations are those concerning his party and his constituent-related activities. These latter are better construed as dispensing patronage or 'running errands', which means regular intervening on behalf of constituents to get them benefits or attend to their complaints.

The Indian MLAs are inundated with visitors, who come mainly with personal problems requesting them to mediate with the administration on their behalf. In rural Uttar Pradesh many such pleas are against alleged police excesses directed at the poor and lower castes in society. In UP, a quarter of our sample reported average daily visitors in excess of 150. One MLA from this state lamented,<sup>16</sup>

We are ineffective in personal as well as official life. Personal life has no time, and work-wise, at our constituency we are hassled with police, *tehsil* (revenue district), and *thana* (another term for police station) cases of people, and at Lucknow (UP's capital), we are inundated with jobs and transfers requests. This is our main function.

The only exception was the CPI(M) MLAs who received a much lower number of visitors when compared to others. In this case the CPI(M)'s well developed party

---

<sup>16</sup> Translated from Hindi. *Hum to dono se hi dur hain. Vyaktigat jeevan ka samay nahin hai or kam ke nam per constituency mein sirf police tehsil or thana ke case hi sujhao, or yahan Lucknow mein job or transfer ka chakker.*

organisation takes over this function so that people who have a grievance may go to party offices for redress.

We observe that, in what might be seen as an unsympathetic and generally inaccessible political system, the MLA has become a focal point of grievances from the society. Even though his influence is limited, he has become one of the 'safety-valves' that prevent societal pressure from building up to violent proportions or at least contains it. By virtue of being an *elected* representative, he is also performing a useful function in providing legitimacy to the political system. It is in these indirect consequences of his position that he seems to be serving the maximum purpose.

Clearly then, apart from being partisan supporters of their party policies and actions, the MLAs appear to serve two main functions: they have become transactional intermediaries through whom out-of-turn favours may be obtained; and, their ready availability as listening-posts means that their constituents bring to them, mostly in hope not in expectation, many personal problems and complaints against the administration.

We have seen that MLAs do not have a clear sense of being effective in their job. Our interviews suggest that this is not just the cynicism of older and senior MLAs but the feeling, in many cases, of new first-timers. Also, the system does not attempt to make them more effective. Even in terms of some organisational help, MLAs do not have any support that might help them in meeting the paperwork and follow-up requirements of their job. Maharashtra state is an exception in this regard and provides secretarial help to its MLAs. CPI(M), and to a limited extent BJP, legislators receive help from voluntary party workers and party offices.

In order to contest elections, most MLAs have to generate personal financial resources as elections have progressively become more expensive. Election laws impose unrealistic limits on campaign expenses, which are routinely violated. As all candidates must spend far in excess of the limits permissible under Indian electoral laws, the candidates have to be able to raise finances themselves. The parties provide little financial help, except for a few reserved Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe constituencies. A typical MLA from a recognised political party would ordinarily spend at least 20 to 30 times the official limit.<sup>17</sup> This immediately compromises the politician. CPI(M) was a striking exception in this regard and none of its MLAs needed to spend any personal money.

An important finding of our study was that the legislators felt that their social status had improved after having been elected to the assembly. They may be putting a low value on their assembly related work, but they clearly put a high value on their social position. Even more significant was the fact that they expected this high social standing to continue, despite their own perceptions of politics having become corrupt. A marginal proportion of MLAs stated that their social position had not improved but worsened. It may be of interest to note that in this small group there was not even one rural resident MLA. In the countryside, therefore, there was a unanimous response that being elected as an MLA improved the social standing of the candidate. Clearly, a political position, as Yogindra Singh has noted, is one way of transcending the caste based social hierarchy in rural India.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> The maximum amount permitted by the Election Commission for State Legislative Assembly elections is Rs. 50,000 in the larger States. MLAs routinely spend Rs. 1.2 to 1.5 million. Election expenditure rules are easily circumvented because the Election Commission provides that expenditure incurred by the candidate's party or by supporters without the explicit permission of the candidate or his election agent is not counted towards his official expenses. All candidates therefore spend money through their "supporters".

<sup>18</sup> Yogindra Singh, 'Changing Pattern of Social Stratification in India' in M N Srinivas et. al. (Eds.), *Dimensions of Social Change in India* op. cit.

An overwhelming majority of MLAs from all states felt that corruption had become pervasive in politics, and the prognosis was pessimistic. Most blamed politicians, as a group, for this state of affairs. Such a response, coming from state-level political elite, is a sad commentary on contemporary Indian politics. On the other hand, it also became clear that corruption is rapidly being institutionalised. Having become a part of daily life, it does not seem to be a big issue on its own. In response to our question asking them to identify India's most critical problems, few legislators listed corruption on their own. It was "taken for granted" as a fact of political life in India.

That the MLAs are truly a state-level elite was confirmed by the response of most that they would contest state assembly in preference to the national parliament, if given the choice. This, despite the fact that most put a premium on the national MP's status, further confirmed their state-level moorings. The significant subordination of CPI(M) legislators to their party was illustrated by the fact that almost half their number stated that they had no opinion on the matter, and that they would follow party directives.

The Indian Constitution embodies a policy of positive discrimination for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This policy has now been in effect for 45 years, but our sampled MLAs gave us a clear response that in their opinion caste-based reservations did not help the concerned communities to overcome their "backwardness" or socially disadvantageous position. Surprisingly, this response came not only from the overall sample of MLAs but even more so from the sub-set of only SC/ST MLAs. Most MLAs belonging to these categories argued that only better education will help in the long run.

How far are these state-level elites entirely immersed in their own constituencies or states? Do they have a feel for the larger Indian canvas? We detected a low sensitivity to India's critical problems, except a sharp concern for rising unemployment - presumably due to the pressure the MLAs constantly encounter to find employment for their supporters and constituents. One other striking concern of MLAs, but in non-Northern states, was that communalism was on the rise.

Taking five main problems identified by MLAs from all the states, we noted considerable variance in the perception of MLAs from different states and parties as follows:

1. Unemployment: West Bengal 62 %, Haryana 33 %.  
CPI(M) 64 %, BJP 41 %.
2. Communalism: Tamilnadu 61 %, Haryana 20 %.  
DMK 68 %, BJP 26 %.
3. Education: UP 40 %, Haryana 13 %.  
BJP 36 %, DMK 11 %
4. Over-population: UP 42 %, West Bengal 9 %.  
Cong.I 40 %, CPI(M) 3 %.
5. National Integration: Maharashtra and West Bengal 38 %, Uttar Pradesh 12 %.  
CPI(M) 67 %, Janata Dal 11 %.

CPI(M)'s almost non-existent response on over-population was unexpected. The MLAs from this party were mostly seen to respond in a way that would be in line with their party position. This appears to indicate that this particular problem of over-population was not on the CPI(M) agenda.



Contrasted with this low sensitivity to national problems, we encountered an overwhelming feeling that India needed a strong Centre. This response came even from those parties, CPI(M) and DMK, which have long argued for a federal structure that would provide greater state autonomy. This response is a model representation of the concept of “unity in diversity” as it conveys that MLAs in culturally different states appear to be unequivocally committed to the idea of a strong “Indian State”. This response is also a good expression of the latent role that MLAs play in contributing to India’s political stability.

On the related issue of national integration, we appeared to have got a relatively mild response concerning the negative role of two main cleavages in the Indian society, language and religion. In striking contrast, we saw an overwhelming response that the conduct of politics itself is an obstacle to national integration. A feeling such as this from the state-level ruling elite can only be seen as a poor reflection on Indian political culture. To the author this response represents a symbolic articulation of the need for political and electoral reform.

### **Final Inferences**

We begin by restating our argument that ‘communication’ between the elites at the apex of the society and the “masses” at the base is generally conducted through intermediary linkages. Institutionally speaking, these linkages are political parties, bureaucracy, judiciary, media, education, and even market mechanisms. In behavioural terms these are influential economic, social and political groups and individuals. Because formal institutions are relatively weak in many developing societies, the role and influence of human agents becomes all the more critical. Implicit in this argument is the assumption that the distance between the elites at the apex of the polity and the “masses” at the base is a continuum occupied by a

multiplicity of *lesser* elites - intermediate and local - each with its own circle of influence.<sup>19</sup> We have argued that the state-level legislators are an important component of the intermediate elite in India and are therefore a critical link in political integration.

The significance of intermediate structures and groups has been highlighted by many. Shils calls them the mediating “infrastructures” or “subsidiary centres” through which the Centre acts.<sup>20</sup> Rajni Kothari argues that in independent India, the intermediate elite demonstrated a “remarkable capacity for commuting between tradition and modernity”, and thus became “the most crucial link in the structure of political integration”. He notes that they are “transmitters of the new central symbols of the polity”.<sup>21</sup> Kothari, however, does not attempt to tell us who these intermediate elites might be, beyond stating that they act as ‘brokers’ at district and constituency level.<sup>22</sup>

We have identified the backbench MLAs as a vital component of the intermediate elite. We do so partly because we argue that at the level of *ideas* and *values*, MLAs are “politically bilingual” and can be effective ‘communicators’ between the apex and the base, while at the level of *interaction*, they are “brokers” in the sense that they mediate the demands of each. But, more importantly, of all the groups who comprise

---

<sup>19</sup> See, Edward Shils, ‘Center and Periphery: An Idea and its Career’ in Liah Greenfield and Michel Martin (Eds.), *Center: Ideas and Institutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988) pp. 250-282. We have adapted Shils’ argument that “there is no society in which a centre, challenged or unchallenged, does not have subsidiary centres through which it acts; there is no society which does not possess a multiplicity of lesser centres, “lesser” meaning a smaller radius of effectiveness than the more central centres.”

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251-53.

<sup>21</sup> Rajni Kothari, *Politics in India*, op.cit., p.90-93

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.91

the intermediate elite it is the politicians who are most dependent on the “masses”. The other groups are important simply because they exist in the system. Their influence is ‘passive’. But not so the MLAs’ (or serious contenders for this position). They can only remain politically important by being in close touch with the base. The result is that they continually approach the “masses” and attempt to influence them by deliberate and vigorous effort.

It is in this characteristic that they are ready agents for initiating change at the base. Their proximity to the base denotes that they operate within a ‘traditional’ political environment but we have observed that they have many ‘modern’ values. The following five points clarify:

- We have seen that the MLAs are educated and relatively urbanised. They are highly participant and significant mobilisers. They are generally exposed to the national media.
- By virtue of being in constant touch with their constituents as listening posts and ‘errand-boys’ they are already intermediaries at the level of interaction in the transactions between the administration and their constituents.
- They feel that they are well respected in their society. This is reflected in their perception that their social status has improved as a result of their political position. This consequently expands their circle of influence.
- They are truly state-level elites, as most of them put the national political arena beyond their reach.
- They value national unity as emphasised by their response in favour of a ‘strong Centre’. In this, they share the values of the elite at the centre of the polity.

All of the above indicates that the MLAs can become a steady and significant network for communication and exchanging ideas and resources between apex and base. Clearly, they have elements of both 'traditional' and 'modern' values, and we believe that if their orientation towards the 'modern' idiom is strong they will be more effective in communicating the values of the centre. Potentially, therefore, they occupy a vital position in the apex-to-base institutional process.

However, India's political arrangements have not adequately attempted to exploit this strategic position of the MLAs. When social or political messages are beamed at the MLAs they can transmit them both ways, but significantly downward. This crucial linkage is grossly under-utilised: the position occupied by MLAs in the institutional structure of the Indian polity is not compatible with the role they actually play. We have already observed that MLAs are extremely weak in meeting one of their main institutional functions, that of holding executive to account. Their only strength comes from their negative ability to destabilise leadership. This adds another dimension to their role as leadership feels obliged to woo them which, in turn, creates opportunities for the MLAs to extract what ever benefits the 'market will bear'. Their main roles, guided by self-interest and with re-election in mind, remain the support of their parties in the House and 'running errands' for their constituents.

However, some MLAs enter politics in a spirit of selfless dedication. During the course of our field work, we met several MLAs whose self-interest appeared to be considerably blended with altruistic attitudes. They were motivated by values, ideals, and commitments that transcended any narrow definitions of self or group interest. But they had little opportunity for a fulfilling contribution to the society, and they were frustrated by the factional and self-centred character of political processes in

their respective states. One particular MLA, who had been a practising medical doctor said,

In our village clinic poor people often refuse treatment because there is no money to pay for medicines. How do you think I feel when a broken father says of his ailing son, "We cannot pay for his surgery, if god wishes him to die then what can we do". I thought I might be able to help people from this House, but I find that I cannot.

This happens because the system is unresponsive to their needs and unappreciative of their intellect and integrity. Once elected, the MLAs gain in status and in expectations of what they might be able to contribute, but there is no institutional demand on their time. We highlight the following three issues to support our argument:

- The constitutional job of an MLA is not meaningful. The assembly sessions occupy only a few days in a year. In any case, the MLAs place a low value on their legislative activity, and they have a sense of being ineffective in their job.
- They have to generate personal resources in order to contest elections, the outcomes of which are far from certain. Large sums must be raised through improper means. No matter how well-meaning the legislators are, most of them must accept corrupt practices as unavoidable, even if unpleasant, norms.
- They are conscious that politics has become highly corrupt. However, they individually cannot do much to prevent it. They must become part of the system or opt out.

The problem with the above situation is two pronged. On the one hand, it generates frustration for those MLAs who seek fulfilment and honour in working selflessly. On the other hand, it also attracts the opportunist and the 'professional politician' looking for a quick way to gather spoils.

India's national elite needs to recognise the premise that the MLAs are potential agents for initiating change at the base. If these agents are influenced by the 'modern' values of the centre, then they are likely to reflect similar values to the periphery. On the other hand, the system can easily make them agents of 'disorder' by allowing the frustration with their jobs and the poor institutional environment in which they operate to continue.

India, as a developing country where integrating agents are rare, would do well to nurture and strengthen its intermediate elite, particularly its MLAs. However, to do so would require widespread institutional and political reform, attempts at which are likely to generate great resistance from the vested interests that the system has created. Whether India will ever find itself strong leadership, secure enough in its own position, to initiate reform aimed at such an exercise is an open question.

## APPENDIX 1

### Questionnaire

State \_\_\_\_\_

Respondent No \_\_\_\_\_ M/F

1. Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: upto 35 \_\_\_\_\_  
36 - 50 \_\_\_\_\_  
51 - 65 \_\_\_\_\_  
Over 65 \_\_\_\_\_  
a) Place of Birth: Rural \_\_\_\_\_  
Urban \_\_\_\_\_
2. Social Background :  
a) Religion \_\_\_\_\_  
b) Caste \_\_\_\_\_  
i. Caste Category: High \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Low \_\_\_\_\_  
ii. Scheduled Caste or Tribe \_\_\_\_\_
3. Residential Background:  
Rural \_\_\_\_\_ Urban \_\_\_\_\_ Semi Urban \_\_\_\_\_ Metropolitan \_\_\_\_\_  
a) Please give the following information in respect of your primary residence:  
i. Place of Residence \_\_\_\_\_  
ii. Is it your ancestral home \_\_\_\_\_  
iii. Is it located within your constituency \_\_\_\_\_  
iv. Since how many years have you lived there \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Educational Qualifications:

- a) If no degree, how many years of schooling \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Classification:
- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Literate _____      | Primary/middle _____ |
| Secondary _____     | Graduate _____       |
| Post Graduate _____ | subject _____        |
| Professional _____  | specialization _____ |
- c) What is your mother-tongue \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Knowledge of English:
- |             |
|-------------|
| Good: _____ |
| Fair: _____ |
| Poor: _____ |
- e) Knowledge of Hindi:
- |             |
|-------------|
| Good: _____ |
| Fair: _____ |
| Poor: _____ |
- f) Any other Language: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Occupational Background & means of Livelihood :**

- a) Besides being an MLA what is your  
Principal occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brief explanation : \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Before you became an MLA what was your occupation:  
i. Same as now \_\_\_\_\_  
ii. If different, please explain \_\_\_\_\_
- c) If in business, are you the sole owner or is the  
business joint with family or other partners:  
i. Sole Ownership \_\_\_\_\_  
ii. Joint with family \_\_\_\_\_  
iii. With partners \_\_\_\_\_

If with joint with family or partners, brief explanation

6. Are you an income tax payer \_\_\_\_\_
7. As a part of your induction as MLA was there any formal or informal training given to you in relation to the work that you are supposed to carry out.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Did you belong to any other party either as a member, an MLA or in some other position. If yes, please give details:



9. Is any other member of your family in politics \_\_\_\_\_  
 a) If yes, please provide details of relationship \_\_\_\_\_ and, which party they belong to \_\_\_\_\_
10. Is any member of your family in government service. If yes please describe the relationship, and position held \_\_\_\_\_
11. How many years have you been in politics \_\_\_\_\_
12. Did you have any background of political activity such as:
  - a) Student Activity \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Youth Wing Activity \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Panchayat Position \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Peasant Activity \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) Municipal corporation \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) Party Organisation \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) Trade Union Activity \_\_\_\_\_
  - h) Any other \_\_\_\_\_
13. What was the process of your selection for the present party ticket to contest election \_\_\_\_\_  
 a) How many applicants were there for this position \_\_\_\_\_  
 b) Indicate if this is a reserved constituency \_\_\_\_\_
14. What were your main sources of finance for campaigning:
  - a) Party Funds \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Personal funds \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Collections by party workers \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Donations from local businesses \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) Caste or Community Associations \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) Any other \_\_\_\_\_
15. Why did you decide to enter politics \_\_\_\_\_
16. Role in Political Linkage and Network:
  - a) How often and in what fashion do you meet your constituents \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mainly what requests and demands are made on you by them \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Are you generally able to comply \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) If not, for what reasons \_\_\_\_\_

17. Role in Policy-Making:

- a) How often do you attend the Assembly \_\_\_\_\_
- b) How often are you able to speak \_\_\_\_\_
- c) What value do you find in speaking:
  - i. Great Value \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Good Value \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. Fair Value \_\_\_\_\_
  - iv. Poor value \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Have you been a member of any legislative committee. If yes, do you feel that usually the results of the committee's work are:
  - i. Good \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Fair \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. Poor \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Do you regularly pose questions in the Assembly \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. How would you rate the answers to questions put up by you or by others:
    - 1. Satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_
    - 2. Not Satisfactory \_\_\_\_\_
    - 3. Mixed (Sometimes satisfactory and at other times not satisfactory) \_\_\_\_\_
    - 4. Evasive (The issue is dodged) \_\_\_\_\_
- f) What is your perception of debates in the assembly? Is there general participation or these are dominated by a few MLAs  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. Role Perceptions:

- a) Most of all, whom do you feel you represent \_\_\_\_\_
- b) What role do you mainly perform above all else \_\_\_\_\_

19. How much time do you spend at your constituency \_\_\_\_\_

- a) Do you have any organisation at your constituency that helps you in your official work. If yes, please explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b) Who pays for this \_\_\_\_\_

20. Perception of Social status:

- a) What do you believe has happened to your social status after you were elected to the assembly:
  - i. It improved \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. It declined \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. It is the same \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Do you believe that it will further improve in the future or decline:
  - i. Will improve \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Will decline \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Please explain why \_\_\_\_\_

21. Many people think that politics has slowly become more corrupt since independence. Do you agree or disagree \_\_\_\_
- a) Please explain why \_\_\_\_
- b) If yes, who do you think is more responsible for this corruption:
- The Politicians \_\_\_\_
  - The Bureaucrats \_\_\_\_
  - Both equally \_\_\_\_
  - Any other \_\_\_\_
- c) How critical is this problem for India:
- Extremely critical \_\_\_\_
  - Acute but not critical \_\_\_\_
  - Not so critical \_\_\_\_
22. If your party offered you a choice of contesting either the state assembly or the Lok Sabha which would you choose:
- State assembly \_\_\_\_
  - Lok Sabha \_\_\_\_
- a) Please explain why \_\_\_\_
- b) Which position do you rank higher in terms of status:
- MLA \_\_\_\_
  - MP \_\_\_\_
- a) Please explain why \_\_\_\_
23. Do you think that in the present political circumstances an MLA is effective in his job \_\_\_\_
- a) In this, do the ruling party MLAs have any advantage over the opposition MLAs \_\_\_\_

#### NATIONAL ISSUES

24. In your opinion what are the five most critical problems that India faces  
\_\_\_\_\_
25. Issues of Family Planning:
- a) Some people say that India is over-populated. Do you agree  
\_\_\_\_\_
- i. If yes how acute is the problem in your perception:
- Critical \_\_\_\_
  - Acute but not critical \_\_\_\_
  - Not so acute \_\_\_\_
  - Not a real problem \_\_\_\_
- b) If you were the one to decide, what measure would you suggest for controlling population:
- Introduce strong disincentives \_\_\_\_
  - Compulsory Sterilization after two or three children  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Only by education \_\_\_\_
  - Any other \_\_\_\_

26. Issues of Poverty:
- a) What, in your opinion, are the main reasons for the persistence of poverty in India even after 40 years of independence:
    - i. Wrong policies of the government \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. Poor policy implementation \_\_\_\_\_
    - iii. Government is not to blame the size of problem is too big \_\_\_\_\_
    - iv. Any other \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) If you were responsible for policy, which sector would you concentrate on:
    - i. Mainly industry \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. Mainly agriculture \_\_\_\_\_
    - iii. Both Agriculture and Industry \_\_\_\_\_
    - iv. Small scale industry \_\_\_\_\_
    - v. Education \_\_\_\_\_
    - vi. Any other \_\_\_\_\_
27. Issues of Caste based Reservations:
- a) Do you agree with *caste-based* reservations in principle \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Do you agree with the way in which implementation of Mandal Commission report was implemented by the NF government \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) How do you evaluate the results of 40 years of reservation policy for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes:
    - i. Good \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. Average/mixed \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. Poor \_\_\_\_\_
28. Issues of Panchayati Raj:
- a) There has been lot of discussion about Panchayati Raj and some people think that it is the best way for rural development. Do you agree \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Some, on the other hand, feel that Panchayati Raj leads to locally powerful castes or groups usurping power and the bulk of benefits. Do you agree \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Some say that Panchayati Raj leads to more leakage of resources and corruption at local level. Do you agree \_\_\_\_\_

29. Issues of Centre-State Relations:
- In your personal perception how have the Centre-state relations changed in the last two decades:
    - Relations have improved \_\_\_\_\_
    - Relations have worsened \_\_\_\_\_
    - No change \_\_\_\_\_
  - Are you in agreement with Sarkaria Commissions recommendations:
    - Which particular ones \_\_\_\_\_
  - Some people feel that India needs a strong Centre and others don't think it is necessary. Do you believe that India needs a strong Centre  
\_\_\_\_\_
30. Issues of National Integration:
- How strongly would you agree or disagree that religion comes in the way of national integration:
    - If yes, indicate intensity on ten point scale \_\_\_\_
  - How strongly would you agree or disagree that language comes in the way of national integration:
    - If yes, indicate intensity on ten point scale \_\_\_\_
  - How strongly would you agree or disagree that politics comes in the way of national integration:
    - If yes, indicate intensity on ten point scale \_\_\_\_
31. Which states other than your home state have you visited  
\_\_\_\_\_
32. Which journals or newspapers do you normally read:
- National only \_\_\_\_\_
  - Regional only \_\_\_\_\_
  - Both national and regional \_\_\_\_\_
  - Local only \_\_\_\_\_
  - Regional and local \_\_\_\_\_
  - None \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 2**

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

**RULES OF PROCEDURE  
OF THE  
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

**(INTERNAL WORKING)**

**MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATURE SECRETARIAT  
BOMBAY  
1983**

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**  
**Rules of Procedure**  
**(Internal Working)**

*(As adopted by the Committee at its meeting held on 22nd January, 1963 and approved by the Speaker, vide Rule 187 of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Rules).*

The following Rules are supplemental to the provisions contained in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Rules 204\* and 205 which relate to the composition, scope, functions and conduct of business by the Public Accounts Committee.

1. After the Appropriation Accounts of the State and the Audit Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India have been laid before the Assembly as provided in Article 151(2) of the Constitution, copies thereof shall be circulated to the Members of the Committee.

2. Copies of the Finance Accounts of the State Government and copies of the Annual Accounts and Audit Report thereon relating to statutory corporations, Government Companies and projects in the State, if any, shall also be circulated to the Members of the Committee after they have been laid on the Table of the Assembly.

3. The Secretary shall prepare a "Consolidated Statement showing action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee relating to the previous year" on the basis of the information supplied by the Secretariat Department and arrange to circulate it to the Members of the Committee at least a week before the date of the concerned sitting. This statement may, if necessary, be accompanied by copies of the Memoranda, Notes or other literature forwarded by the Secretariat Department stating the action taken by them on the particular item / items with which they are concerned. Five copies of the said statement shall be forwarded to the Accountant General, Maharashtra.

4. The Committee shall meet at such time and for such period as the Chairman may determine from time to time.

5. The Secretary shall, with the approval of the Chairman, draw up the detailed programme of sittings of the Committee and circulate copies thereof to the members of the Committee and Government Departments concerned.

6. The members may, after going through the Accounts and Reports referred to in Rules (1) and (2) above, frame questions or points on which further information is required by them and may make suggestions for the consideration of the Committee. These questions, points or suggestions may be sent to the Secretary ordinarily seven days in advance of the date of the meeting. Where the Committee meets at short notice, the period of seven days referred to above, may be reduced under orders of the Chairman.

7. Usually 45 copies each of the Notes, Memoranda, etc., will be furnished by the Departments in reference to the point or points on which the information may be called for by the Committee or a member thereof. On receipt thereof, copies will be circulated to the members, Five copies of the Notes, Memoranda, etc., shall be forwarded to the Account General, Maharashtra.

8. The Secretary shall note the points on which further information is required by the Committee as a result of the examination of the Departmental Secretaries or their Representatives and under the directions of the Chairman, take such action as may be necessary.

9. The Committee may call or recall any witness to give evidence on any point which is under consideration of the Committee.

10. Unless any paper is marked "Secret" or the Department has made a specific request that its contents should not be made public, any document laid before the Committee may be embodied in its report in the form of an Appendix.

11. The Committee may appoint one or more Sub-Committees, each having the powers of the undivided committee for the purpose of examining matters that may be referred to them, and the reports of such Sub-Committees shall be deemed to be the reports of the whole Committee, if they are approved at a meeting of the whole Committee.

12. The Committee may divide itself into Study Groups, whenever necessary such group being entrusted with certain specified Departments for intensive and detailed study.

13. After the examination of the Accounts and other material placed before it, the Committee may frame its recommendations.

14. Each draft report or part thereof shall be considered at a meeting of the Committee and shall embody the decisions of the majority of the members present and voting.

15. The Report of the Committee shall be signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Committee.

16. The Report of the Committee shall be presented to the House by the Chairman of the Committee or in his absence by any member of the Committee.

17. As soon as each report has been completed, it shall be printed.

18. A record of the proceedings of each meeting of the Committee shall be kept by the Secretary.

19. Relevant portions of the proceedings shall be forwarded to the respective members and the officials tendering evidence before the Committee for confirmation and return within two days of their receipt and if they are not so returned, the Reporter's copy will be treated as authentic.

20. The sittings of the Committee shall not be open to the Press. The Secretary may however, under the direction of the Chairman, at the end of the day, give to the Press information only about the Accounts and names of the Departments examined by the Committee during the day.

21. No documents submitted to the Committee shall be withdrawn or altered without the knowledge and approval of the Committee. This also applies to any portion of the evidence returned by a member, or a Departmental Representative as per Rule 19 above and which he thinks requires any alteration.

22. Where the Public Accounts Committee decides as a special case to print any part or the whole of the evidence, the same shall be printed in the form of a separate volume and shall form part of the Report of the Committee dealing with the relevant Accounts and Audit Report thereon.

23. The minutes of the sittings of the Committee and the Sub-Committees shall be maintained. Such minutes shall be included in the Report of the Committee with the approval of the Committee.



## **APPENDIX I**

### **Rules 162 to 191 of the Maharashtra Legislative**

#### **Assembly Rules**

#### **COMMITTEE**

##### **(General)**

**162. Appointment of Committee.** - (1) The members of a Committee shall be appointed by the House either under the rules or on a motion made, or nominated by the Speaker, as the case may be:

Provided that, except in the case of a Select Committee or Joint Committee on a Bill or the Committee on Rules or the Business Advisory Committee or such other Committee as the Speaker may from time to time specify, or as specifically otherwise provided by the rules, a Minister shall not be a Member of the Committee and that if a member after his appointment on a Committee is appointed as a Minister, he shall cease to be a member of the Committee from the date of such appointment.

(2) Casual vacancies in a Committee shall be filled by appointment by the House on a motion made or nomination by the Speaker, as the case may be, and any member appointed or nominated to fill such vacancy shall hold office for the unexpired portion of the term for which the member in whose place is appointed or nominated would have normally held office.

**162A. Nomination to be in proportion to the strength in the House, Composition of Committees.** - (1) Where, under these rules, the Speaker has to nominate members on any Committee he shall take into account the relative strength of recognised parties or groups and nominate members, as nearly as may be, in proportion to the strength of such parties and groups in the Assembly and after consulting the leader of the House the Leader of Opposition and the Leader of each such group:

Provided that nothing contained in this sub-rule shall be construed as preventing the Speaker from nominating on any Committee any member not belonging to any such parties or groups.

(2) If any question arises as regards the number of members to be nominated on behalf of any such party or group, the decision of the Speaker shall be final.

**163. Term of Office of Committee nominated by the Speaker.** - (1) A Committee nominated by the Speaker shall, unless otherwise specified in the rules contained in this part, hold office for the period specified by him or until a new Committee is nominated.

(2) A member of a Committee shall be eligible for re-nomination.

(3) During any vacancy in the Committee, the continuing members may act as if no vacancy has occurred."

**164. Resignation from Committee.** - A member may resign his seat from a Committee by writing under his hand addressed to the Speaker.

**165. Chairman of Committee.** - (1) The Chairman of a Committee shall be appointed by the Speaker from amongst the members of the Committee.

Provided that, if the Deputy Speaker is a member of the Committee, he shall be appointed Chairman of the Committee.

(2) If the Chairman for any reason unable to act, the Speaker may appoint another Chairman in his place.

(3) If the Chairman is absent from any sitting the Committee shall choose another member to act as Chairman for that sitting.

(4) **Secretary of Committee.** - The Secretary shall be ex-officio Secretary of every Committee other than a Joint Committee appointed on the recommendations of the Council.

166. **Quorum.** - (1) The quorum to constitute a sitting of a Committee shall be, as near as may be, one-fourth of the total number of members of the Committee.

(2) If, at any time fixed for any sitting to the Committee, or if at any time during such sitting, there is no quorum, the Chairman of the Committee shall either suspend the sitting until there is a quorum or adjourn the sitting to some future day.

(3) When the Committee has been adjourned in pursuance of sub-rule (2) on two successive dates fixed for sittings of the Committee, the Chairman shall report the fact to the House :

Provided that, where the Committee has been nominated by the Speaker, "the Chairman shall report the fact of such adjournment to the Speaker".

167. **Discharge of members absent from sittings of Committee.** - If a member is absent from two or more consecutive sittings of a Committee without the permission of the Chairman, a motion may be moved in the House for the discharge of such member from the Committee.

168. **Voting in Committee.** - All questions at any sitting of a Committee shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present and voting.

169. **Casting Vote of Chairman.** - In the case of an equality of votes on any matter, the Chairman, or the person acting as such, shall have a second or casting vote.

170. **Power to appoint Sub-Committees.** - (1) A committee may appoint one or more sub-committees, each having the powers of the undivided Committee, to examine any matters that may be referred to them, and the reports of such sub-committees shall be deemed to be the reports of the whole Committee if they are approved at a sitting of the whole Committee.

(2) The order of reference to a sub-committee shall clearly state the point or points for investigation. The report of the sub-committee shall be considered by the whole Committee.

171. **Sittings of Committee.** -The Sittings of a Committee shall be held on such days and at such hour as the Chairman of the Committee may fix.

Provided that, if the Chairman of the Committee is not readily available the Secretary may fix the date and time of a sitting:

Provided further that, in the case of Select Committee or Joint Committee on a Bill, if the Chairman of the Committee is not readily available the Secretary may, in consultation with the Minister concerned with the Bill, fix the date and time of a sitting.

172. **Committee may sit whilst House is sitting.** - A committee may sit whilst the House is sitting provided that, on a division being called in the House, the Chairman of the Committee shall suspend the proceedings in the Committee for such time as will in his opinion enable the members to vote in the division.

173. **Sittings of Committee in private.** - The sittings of a Committee shall be held in private.

174. **Venue of sittings.** - The sittings of a Committee shall be held within the precincts of the Council Hall, and if it becomes necessary to change the place of sitting outside the Council Hall, the matter shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final.

175. **All Strangers to withdraw when Committee deliberates.** - All persons other than members of the Committee and officer of the Maharashtra Legislature Secretariat shall withdraw whenever the Committee is deliberating.

176. **Power to send for persons, paper and records.** - All persons other than members of the Committee and officer of the Maharashtra Legislature Secretariat shall withdraw whenever the Committee is deliberating.

Provided that, if any questions arises whether the evidence of a person or the production of a document is relevant for the purposes of the Committee, the question shall be referred to the Speaker whose decision shall be final:

Provided further that, Government may decline to produce a document on the ground that its disclosure would be prejudicial to the safety or interest of the State.

177. **Procedure for examining witness.** - The examination of witness before a Committee shall be conducted as follows:-

(i) The Committee shall, before a witness is called for examination decide the mode of procedure and the nature of questions that may be asked of the witness.

(ii) The Chairman of the Committee may first ask the witness such question or questions as he may consider necessary with reference to the subject-matter under consideration or any subject connected therewith according to the mode of procedure mentioned in clause (i) of this rule.

(iii) The Chairman may call other members of the Committee one by one to ask any other questions.

(iv) A witness may be asked to place before the Committee any other relevant points that have not been covered and which a witness thinks are essential to be placed before the Committee.

(v) A verbatim record of proceedings of the Committee shall when a witness is summoned to give evidence, be kept.

(vi) The evidence tendered before the Committee may be made available to all members, of the Committee.

178. **Record of decisions of Committee.** A record of the decisions of a Committee shall be maintained and circulated to members of the Committee under the direction of the Chairman.

179. **Evidence reports and proceedings treated as confidential.** - (1) A committee may direct that the whole or a part of the evidence or a summary thereof may be laid on the Table.

(2) No part of the evidence, oral or written, report or proceedings of a Committee which has not been laid down on the table shall be open to inspection by any one except under the authority of the Speaker.

(3) The evidence given before a Committee shall not be published by any member of the Committee or any other person until it has been laid on the Table:

180. **Special reports.** - A Committee may, if it thinks fit, make a special report on any matter that arises or comes to light in the course of its work which it may consider necessary to bring to the notice of the Speaker or the House, notwithstanding that such matter is not directly connected with, or does not fall within, or is not incidental to, its terms of reference.

181. **Reports of Committee.** - (1) Where the House has not fixed any time for the presentation of a report by a Committee, the report shall be presented within one month of the date on which reference to the Committee was made:

Provided that the House may at any time on a motion being made, direct that the time for the presentation of the report by the Committee be extended to a date specified in the motion.

(2) Reports may be either preliminary or final.

(3) Report of a Committee shall be signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Committee.

Provided that, in case the Chairman is absent or is not readily available, the Committee shall choose another member to sign the report on behalf of the committee.

182. **Availability of report to Government before presentation.** - A Committee may, if it thinks fit, make available to Government any completed part of its report before presentation to the House. Such reports shall be treated as confidential until presented to the House.

183. **Presentation of Report.** - (1) The report of a Committee shall be presented to the House by the Chairman or, in his absence, by any member of the Committee.

(2) In presenting the report the Chairman or, in his absence, the member presenting the report shall, if he makes any remarks confine himself to a brief statement of fact, but there shall be no debate on that statement at this stage.

184. **Printing, publication or circulation of report prior to its presentation to House:-** The Speaker may, on a request being made to him and when the House is not in session, order the printing publication or circulation of a report of a Committee although it has not been presented to the House. In that case the report shall be presented to the House during its next session at the first convenient opportunity.

185. **General control and supervision of Speaker on working of the Committee:-** A Committee shall function under the general control and supervision of the Speaker, who may, from time to time, issue such instructions, as he may consider necessary for the efficient working of the Committee.

186. **Power to make suggestions on procedure:** - Subject to the rules, a Committee shall have powers to pass resolution on matters of procedure relating to that Committee for the

consideration of the Speaker, who may make such variations in procedure as he may consider necessary.

187. **Power of Committee to make detailed rules.**- A Committee may, with the approval of the Speaker, make detailed rules of procedure to supplement the provisions contained in the rules in this Part.

188. **Power to Speaker to give directions.** - (1) Subject to the rules, the Speaker may from time to time issue such directions to the Chairman of a Committee as he may consider necessary for regulating its procedure and the organization of its work.

(2) If any doubt arises on any point of procedure or otherwise, the Chairman may if he thinks fit refer the point to the Speaker whose decision shall be final.

(3) **Power of Chairman of Committee to regulate procedure in Committee.** - The procedure in a Committee shall subject to these rules, supplementary rules and resolutions made by the Committee and directions or other instructions issued by the Speaker, be regulated by its Chairman.

189. **Business before Committee not to lapse on prorogation of House.** - Any business pending before a Committee shall not lapse by reason only of the prorogation of the House and the Committee shall continue to function notwithstanding such prorogation.

190. **Unfinished work of Committee.** - A Committee, which is unable to complete its work before the expiration of its term or before the dissolution of the House, may report to the House that the Committee has not been able to complete its work. Any preliminary report, memorandum or note that the Committee may have prepared or any evidence that the Committee may have taken shall be made available to the new Committee.

191. **Applicability of general rules to Committee.** - Except for matters for which special provision is made in the rules relating to any particular Committee, the general rules in this Part shall apply to all Committees: and if and so far as may provisions in the special rules relating to a Committee is inconsistent with the general rules, the former rules shall prevail.

\*Sub-rule (1) and (2) of Rule 162 and 163 are substituted and Rule 162A is inserted after Rule 162 vide M.I.S. Extra-ordinary Notification, dated 22nd April 1981.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Rules 204 and 205 of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Rules**

#### **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

\*204. **Constitution of Committee on Public Accounts.** - (1) As soon as may be after the commencement of the first Session of the Assembly in every year, or the first Session of a newly constituted Assembly, as the case may be a Committee on Public Accounts shall be constituted for the purpose of dealing with the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India relating to the Appropriation Accounts of the State and such other accounts as may be laid before the House and such other matters as the Finance Department may, with the permission of the Speaker, refer to the Committee.

(2) The Committee on Public Accounts shall consist of not more than twenty five members, out of whom not more than twenty members, shall be nominated by the Speaker from

amongst the members of the Assembly and not more than five members shall likewise be nominated by the Chairman from amongst the members of the Council.

(3) The member of the Committee shall hold office until a new Committee is constituted.

**205. Control of Committee on Public Accounts.** - In scrutinising the Appropriation Accounts of the State and the report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon, it shall be the duty of the Public Accounts Committee to satisfy itself:-

(a) that the moneys shown in the accounts as having been disbursed were legally available for and applicable to the service or purpose to which they have been applied or charged;

(b) that the expenditure conforms to the authority which governs it, and

(c) that every reappropriation has been made in accordance with such rules as have been prescribed by the competent authority.

(2) It shall also be the duty of the Public Accounts Committee:-

(a) to scrutinise the Finance accounts of the State Government and the Audit Report thereon;

(b) to examine the statements of accounts showing the income and expenditure of State Corporations, trading and manufacturing schemes and projects, together with the balance sheets and statements of profit and loss accounts which the Governor may have required to be prepared or are prepared under the provisions of the statutory rules regulating the financing of a particular corporation, trading concerns or project, and the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon; and

(c) to consider the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General in cases where the Governor may have required him to conduct an audit of any receipts or to examine the accounts of stores and stocks.

Provided that the Committee shall not exercise its functions in relation to such public undertakings as come within the purview of the Committee on Public Undertakings under these Rules.

(3) If any money has been spent on any service during a financial year in excess of the amount granted by the House for that purpose, the Committee shall examine with reference to the facts of each case the circumstances leading to such an excess and make such recommendation as it may deem fit.

\*Rule 204 (Sixth edition) is substituted vide M.I.S. Extra-Ordinary Notification dated 22nd April 1981.

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acharya Poromesh, 'Is Macaulay Still Our Guru?' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 28, 1988.
- Agarwal A N, Varma H O, and Gupta R C, *India: Economic Information Yearbook 1991-92*, Revised Sixth Edition (New Delhi: National, 1992)
- Agarwala S N, *India's Population Problem* (Bombay: Tata Mcgraw Hill, 1973)
- Agrawal S P and J C Aggarwal, *Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha Elections 1989-1990* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1990)
- Ahmad Karuna, 'Towards a Study of Education and Social Change' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, No.4, January, 1979)
- Alatas Syed Hussein, *Corruption: Its Nature, Causes and Functions* (Avebury: Gower Publishing, 1990)
- Alexander Herbert E & Monica Bauer, *Financing the 1988 Election* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991)
- Ambedkar S N, *Political Elite* (Jaipur: Printwell, 1992)
- Arya Sunanda, *Legitimacy of the Political System: A Study of the Perceptions of the Rajasthan Legislative Elite* (Jaipur: Arihant Publishers 1991)
- Bailey F G, *Politics and Social Change: Orissa in 1959* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963)
- Banerji D, 'Family Planning in India: Some Inhibiting Factors' in Ashis Bose et al. (Eds.), *Population in India's Development: 1947 - 2000* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1974)
- Barber James David, *The Lawmakers: Recruitment and Adaptation to Legislative Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965)
- Barnett Marguerite Ross, *The Politics of Cultural Nationalism in South India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976)
- Barua B P, *Politics and Constitution-Making in India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep, 1984)

- Basu Tapan, Pradip Datta, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar, and Sambuddha Sen, *Khaki Shorts and Saffron flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right* (London: Sangam books, 1993)
- Baviskar B S, *The Politics of Development: Sugar Co-operatives in Rural Maharashtra* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980)
- Bayley David H, 'The Effects of Corruption in a Developing Nation' in *Western Political Quarterly*, XIX, 4, December, 1966)
- Beer Samuel H, 'The British Legislature and the Problem of Mobilizing Consent' in Philip Norton (Ed.), *Legislatures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)
- Belavadi S H, *Maharashtra Legislative Assembly: 50 Years (1937-87), its Genesis, Growth and Work* (Bombay: Maharashtra Legislative Secretariat, 1989)
- Beteille André, 'Caste and Political Group Formation in Tamilnad' in Rajni Kothari (Ed.), *Caste in Indian Politics* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1970)
- Beteille André, *The Backward Classes in Contemporary India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992)
- Bhalla R P, 'The Electoral System: Its Operation and Implications for Democracy in India' in M P Singh (Ed.), *Lok Sabha Elections 1989: Indian Politics in 1990s* (Delhi: Kalinga Publications, 1992)
- Bhargava G S, *India's Watergate: A Study of Political Corruption in India* (New Delhi: Arnold Heimann, 1974)
- Bhaskaran R, *Sociology of Politics: Tradition and Politics in India* (London: Asia Publishing, 1967)
- Bhattacharya N, D Coondoo, Pradip Maiti, and Robin Mukerjee, *Poverty, Inequality and Prices in Rural India* (New Delhi: 1991)
- Blondel Jean, *Comparative Legislatures* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973)
- Bogdanor Vernon (Ed.), *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituents in Western Democracies* (Aldershot, Hants: Gower Publishing, 1985)
- Bombwall K R, *The Foundations of Indian Federalism* (London: Asia Publishing, 1967)
- Borthwick Robert, 'The Flow of the House' in Michael Ryle and Peter Richards (Eds.), *The Commons Under Scrutiny* (London: Routledge, 1988)



- Bose Ashis et al. (Eds.), *Population in India's Development: 1947 - 2000* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1974)
- Boynton G R and Chong Lim Kim (Eds.), *Legislative Systems in Developing Countries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1975)
- Brass Paul, *Caste, Faction & Party in Indian Politics: Faction and Party* Vol. Two (Delhi: Chanakya, 1985)
- Brass Paul, 'Language, Religion and Politics' in Subroto Roy and William James (Eds.) *Foundations of India's Political Economy* (New Delhi: Sage, 1992)
- Brass Paul, 'Division in the Congress and the Rise of Agrarian Interests and Issues in Uttar Pradesh Politics, 1952 to 1977' in John R Wood (Ed.), *State Politics in Contemporary India: Crisis or Continuity* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1984)
- Brass Paul, *The New Cambridge History of India IV.1: The Politics of India since Independence* (Hyderabad, India: Orient Longman, 1990)
- Brass Paul, *Caste, Faction & Party in Indian Politics: Election Studies* Vol. One (Delhi: Chanakya, 1984)
- Brass Paul, 'Pluralism, Regionalism, and Decentralizing Tendencies in Contemporary Indian Politics' in A Jayaratnam Wilson and Dennis Dalton (Eds.), *The States of South Asia: Problems of National Integration* (London: C Hurst, 1982)
- Brown Richard, *Indian State Legislative Behaviour: The Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly 1952-1968* (Ph.D. Thesis, American University, 1971)
- Burke Edmund, 'Speech to the Electors of Bristol' in *Speeches and Letters on American Affairs* (London: Everyman edition, 1961)
- Butler David, Ashok Lahiri and Prannoy Roy, *India Decides: Elections 1952-1991* (New Delhi: Living Media, 1991)
- Chabbra H K & W T Jones, *State Politics in India* (Delhi: Surjeet Publications, 1980)
- Chaudhry K C, *Congress in Free India* (New Delhi: Neelaj Publications, 1980)
- Chopra S L & D S Chauhan, 'Emerging Patterns of Political Leadership in India' in *Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies* V(IV), 1970.
- Chopra Vir, 'The Imperative of Reform' in Subhash C Kashyap (Ed.), *Reforming the Constitution* (New Delhi: UBSPD, 1992)

- Coleman James A (Ed.), *Education and Political Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965)
- Crozier Michel, Samuel P Huntington, Joji Watanuki (Eds.), *The Crisis of Democracy* (New York: New York University Press, 1975)
- Da Costa E P W, 'A Portrait of Indian Poverty' in A J Fonseca (Ed.), *Challenge of Poverty in India* (Delhi: Vikas, 1971)
- Das Gupta Jyotindra, *Language Conflict and National Development: Group Politics and National Language Policy in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970)
- Davidson Roger H and Walter J Oleszek, *Congress and its Members* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1981)
- Davidson Roger, *The Role of the Congressman* (New York: Pegasus, 1969)
- Deb P K, 'Working of Panchayati Raj in Orissa' in A P Padhi (Ed.), *Indian State Politics: A Case Study of Orissa* (Delhi: B R Publishing, 1985)
- Dickey Sara, 'The Politics of Adulation in South India' in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.52, No.2, May 1993.
- Drewry Gavin, 'The Committees since 1983' in Gavin Drewry (Ed.), *The New Select Committees: A Study of 1979 Reforms* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)
- Drewry Gavin (Ed.), *The New Select Committees: A Study of 1979 Reforms*, 2nd Edition, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)
- Dwivedy S and G S Bhargava, *Political Corruption in India* (New Delhi: Popular, 1967)
- Eldridge Albert F (Ed.), *Legislatures in Plural Societies: The Search for Cohesion in National Development* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1977)
- Englefield Dermot (Ed.), *Commons Select Committees: Catalysts for Progress?* (Essex: Longman, 1984)
- Esman Milton J and Norman T Uphoff, *Local Organizations: Intermediaries in Rural Development* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984)
- Eulau Heinz and John C Wahlke et al, *The Politics of Representation: Continuities in Theory and Research* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1978)
- Fartaya H S, *Role of Opposition in the Indian Parliament* (Allahabad: Chaitanya Publishing, 1971)

- Finer S E, 'The Contemporary Context of Representation' in Vernon Bogdaner (Ed.), *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituents in Western Democracies* (Aldershot, Hants: Gower Publishing, 1985)
- Forrester Duncan B, 'State Legislators in Madras' in *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, march 1969.
- Francis Wayne L & James W Riddlesperger, 'U.S. State Legislative Committees: Structure, Procedural Efficiency, and Party Control' in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol.VII, No.4, November, 1982)
- Franda Marcus, *Political Development and Political Decay in Bengal* (Calcutta: Firma K L Mukhopadhyay, 1971)
- Frankel Francine R, *India's Political Economy 1947-1977: The Gradual Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978)
- Frankel Francine & M S A Rao (Eds.), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990)
- Gahrana Kanan, 'Parliamentary System and Unitarianism in India: Is a Systemic Change Needed?' in *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. I, No.3, July-Sept., 1990.
- Galanter Marc, *Competing Equalities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984)
- Geertz Clifford (Ed.), *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* (New York: The Free Press, 1963)
- Gerlich Peter, 'Orientations to Decision-Making in the Vienna City Council' in Samuel C Patterson and John C Wahlke, *Comparative Legislative Behavior: Frontiers of Research* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972)
- Ghosh Arun, 'Popular Participation and Decentralised Planning' in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 16 January, 1988.
- Ghouse Mohammad, *Secularism, Society, and Law in India* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1973)
- Gopal S, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979)
- Graham B D, *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990)
- Greenstein Fred A and Nelson W Polsby (Eds.), *Handbook of Political Science Vol.5 - Governmental Institutions and Processes* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975)

- Gupta A K, *Emerging Pattern of Political Leadership: A Case Study of Punjab* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1991)
- Gupta D C, *Indian Government and Politics* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1982)
- Hangen Welles, *After Nehru Who* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963)
- Hanson A H, 'The Crisis of Indian Planning' in *Planning and the Politicians* (London: Routledge, 1969)
- Hanson A H, *The Process of Planning: A Study of India's Five Year Plans 1950-1964* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966)
- Hardgrave Jr. Robert L and Stanley Kochanek, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation*, 4th Edition (San Diego, CA: Harcourt, 1986)
- Hardgrave Robert L. Jr., *India Under Pressure: Prospects for Political Stability* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1984)
- Harrison Selig, *The Most Dangerous Decades* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958)
- Hazary S C, *Student Politics in India* (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing, 1987)
- Heidenheimer Arnold J, Michael Johnston & Victor J Levine (Eds.), *Political Corruption: A Handbook* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1989)
- Hewitt Vernon, *Locating the Internal Emergency: Congress Politics and India 1967-77* (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Oxford University, 1987)
- Hooda R K, *Man of the Masses: Chaudhary Charan Singh* (New Delhi: Chaudhary Hari Ram & Sons, 1979)
- Huntington Samuel P, 'Change to Change: Modernization, Development and Politics' in *Comparative Politics*, April 1971.
- Huntington Samuel P, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968)
- Jackson Brooks, *Honest Graft* (Washington, DC: Ferragut, 1990)
- Jain R B, *The Indian Parliament: Innovations, Reforms, and Development* (Columbia, MO: South Asia Books, 1976)
- Jaisingh Hari, 'Time for a Second Republic' in Subhash C Kashyap (Ed.), *Reforming the Constitution* (New Delhi: UBSPD, 1992)

- Jewell Malcolm, 'Attitudinal Determinants of Legislative Behavior: the Utility of Role Analysis' in Allan Kornberg and Lloyd Musolf (Eds.), *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970)
- Jha Dayadhar, *State Legislature in India: Legislature in the Indian Political System* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1977)
- Jha Shashishekhar, *Political Elite in Bihar* (Bombay: Vora & Co., 1972)
- Johnson Neville, 'An Academic's View' in Dermot Englefield (Ed.), *Commons Select Committees: Catalysts for Progress?* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1984)
- Joshi G N, *The Constitution of India*, Seventh Edition (Delhi: Macmillan India, 1983)
- Kashyap Subhash C, 'Committees in Indian Lok Sabha' in John D Lees & Malcolm Shaw (Eds.), *Committees in Legislatures: A Comparative Analysis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979)
- Kashyap Subhash C, *The Politics of Defection* (New Delhi: National, 1968)
- Kashyap Subhash C, *Socio-Economic Background of Lok Sabha Members* (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1987)
- Kashyap Subhash C, *Parliament in India: Myth and Realities* (New Delhi: National, 1988)
- Kaviraj Sudipta, 'On the Crisis of Political Institutions in India' in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.)18, 2 (1984)
- Kim Chong Lim & Byong-Kyu Woo, 'Political Representation in the Korean National Assembly' in Boynton and Kim (Eds.), *Legislative Systems in Developing Countries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1975)
- Kim Lim Chong, Joel D Barkan, Ilter Turan, Malcolm E Jewell, *The Legislative Connection: The Politics of Representation in Kenya, Korea, and Turkey* ((Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1984)
- King Anthony, 'How to Strengthen Legislatures - Assuming that we want to' in Norman J Ornstein (Ed.), *The Role of the Legislature in Western Democracies* (Washington, DC: AEI, 1981)
- Kochanek Stanley, *The Congress Party of India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969)
- Kohli Atul (Ed.), *India's Democracy: An Analysis of Changing State Society Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988)

- Kohli Atul, *The State and Poverty in India: The Politics of Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1987)
- Kohli Atul, 'From Elite Activism to Democratic Consolidation: Political Change in West Bengal' in Francine Frankel & M S A Rao (Eds.), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990)
- Kohli Atul, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1991)
- Kornberg Allan and Lloyd Musolf (Eds.), *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970)
- Kornberg Allan, *Legislatures in Comparative Perspective* (New York: David McKay, 1973)
- Kornberg Allan & W Mishler, *Influence in Parliament: Canada* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1976)
- Kornberg Allan, 'Parliament in Canadian Society' in Allan Kornberg & Lloyd Musolf (Eds.), *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970)
- Kothari Rajni (Ed.), *Caste in Indian Politics* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1970)
- Kothari Rajni, *Politics and the People: In Search of a Humane India*, Two Volumes, (New York: New Horizon Press, 1989)
- Kothari Rajni, *Politics in India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1970)
- Krueger Anne O, 'The Political Economy of the Rent-Seeking Society' in *The American Economic Review*, Vol LXIV, No.3, June, 1974.
- Kulkarni Sumati, 'Economic Implications of Population Growth in India' in K Srinivasan & S Mukerji (Eds.), *Dynamics of Population and Family Welfare in India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1979)
- Kumar Arun, *The Tenth Round: Story of Indian Elections 1991* (Calcutta: Rupa & Co., 1991)
- Lakdawala D T, 'Eighth Finance Commission's Recommendations' in I S Gulati (Ed.), *Centre-State Budgetary Transfers* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1987)
- Laundy Philip, *Parliament in the Modern World* (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing, 1989)

- Lees John D and Malcolm Shaw (Eds.), *Committees in Legislatures: A Comparative Analysis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979)
- Leff Nathaniel H, 'Economic Development through Bureaucratic Corruption' in Arnold J Heidenheimer et al. (Eds.), *Political Corruption: A Handbook* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1989)
- Lele Jayant, *Elite Pluralism and Class Rule: Political Development in Maharashtra, India* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981)
- Lele Jayant, 'Caste, Class, and Dominance: Political Mobilization in Maharashtra' in Francine Frankel & M S A Rao (Eds.), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India* Vol.II, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990)
- Lerner Daniel, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (The Free Press, 1958)
- Levy Gary and Graham White (Eds.), *Provincial and Territorial Legislatures in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989)
- Lizy M A, *Centre-State Financial Relations in India* (New Delhi: Ashok Publishing, 1990)
- Lock Geoffrey, 'Resources and Operation of Select Committees: a Survey of Statistics' in Gevin Drewry (Ed.), *The New Select Committees: A Study of 1979 Reforms* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)
- Loewenberg Gerhard and Samuel C Patterson, *Comparing Legislatures* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1979)
- Loewenberg Gerhard, Samuel C Patterson, and Malcolm E Jewell (Eds.), *Handbook of Legislative Research* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985)
- Lok Sabha Secretariat, *Parliamentary Committees* (New Delhi, 1988)
- Lok Sabha Secretariat, *Tenth Lok Sabha, Who's Who 1992* (New Delhi, 1992)
- Lok Sabha Secretariat, *President's Rule in States* (New Delhi: Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1985)
- M N Srinivas et al. (Eds.), *Dimensions of Social Change in India* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1977)
- Maheshwari Shriram, *Local Government in India*, Revised Edition (New Dehi: Orient Longman, 1976)

- Maheshwari Shriram, *Rural Development in India: A Public Policy Approach* (New Delhi: Sage, 1985)
- Maheshwari Shriram, *Political Development in India* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1984)
- Mamkoottam Kuriakose, *Trade Unionism: Myth and Reality* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982)
- Manor James, 'The State of Governance' in Subroto Roy and William James (Eds.) *Foundations of India's Political Economy* (New Delhi: Sage, 1992)
- Manor James, 'The Dynamics of Political Integration and Disintegration' in A Jayaratnam Wilson and Dennis Dalton (Eds.), *The States of South Asia: Problems of National Integration* (London: C. Hurst, 1982)
- Mathew George (Ed.), *Panchayati Raj in Karnataka Today: Its National Dimensions* (New Delhi: Institute of Social Sciences, 1986)
- Matthews Donald R, 'Legislative Recruitment and Legislative Careers' in Gerhard Loewenberg et al. (Eds.), *Handbook of Legislative Research* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985)
- Medhi Kunja, *State Politics in India* (New Delhi: Omsons Publications, 1988)
- Mezey Michael, 'Third World Legislatures' in Gerhard Loewenberg, Samuel Patterson, and Malcolm Jewell (Eds.), *Handbook of Legislative Research* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985)
- Mezey Michael, *Comparative Legislatures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979)
- Mishra S N, *Panchayati Raj, Bureaucracy, and Rural Development* (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1986)
- Mishra S N, *Rural Development and Panchayati Raj* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1981)
- Mitra Subrata K, *Power, Protest and Participation: Local Elites and the Politics of Development in India* (London: Routledge, 1992)
- Mohapatra Manindra Kumar, 'The Ombudsmanic Role of Legislators in an Indian State' in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, I, 3, August 1976.
- Monteiro John B, 'The Dimensions of Corruption in India' in Arnold Heidemheimer (Ed.) *Political Corruption: Readings in Comparative Analysis* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1978)



- Morris-Jones W H, *Politics Mainly Indian* (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1978)
- Morris-Jones W H, *Parliament in India* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957)
- Morris-Jones W H, *The Government and Politics of India*, reprint edition (England: The Eothen Press, 1987)
- Morris-Jones W H, 'Language and Region within the Indian Union' in Philip Mason (Ed.), *India And Ceylon: Unity and Diversity* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967)
- Morris-Jones W H, 'Editor's Introduction: The Parliamentary Politician in Asia' in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* I, 3, August 1976)
- Mukarji Nirmal and Ashis Banerjee, *Democracy, Federalism and the Future of India's Unity* (New Delhi: Uppal, 1987)
- Muppidi Sarojini, *Finance Commission and Centre-State Relations* (Allahabad: Chugh Publications, 1991)
- Narain Iqbal and Shashi Lata Puri, 'Legislators in an Indian State: A Study of Role Images and the Pattern of Constituency Linkages' in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, I, 3, August, 1976.
- Newman R S, *Grassroots Education in India: A Challenge for Policy Makers* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1989)
- Norton Philip, *Legislatures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)
- Norton Philip, *The Commons in Perspective* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985)
- Nossiter T J, *Communism in Kerala: A Study in Political Adaptation* (London: C Hurst & Co., 1982)
- Nossiter T J, *Marxist State Governments in India: Politics, Economics and Society* (London: Pinter, 1988)
- Olson David M, *The Legislative Process: A Comparative Approach* (New York: Harpers & Row, 1980)
- Ornstein Norman J (Ed.), *The Role of the Legislature in Western Democracies* (Washington, DC: AEI, 1981)
- Packenham Robert A, 'Legislatures and Political Development' in Allan Kornberg and Lloyd Musolf (Eds.), *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970)

- Padhi A P (Ed.), *Indian State Politics: A Case Study of Orissa* (Delhi: B R Publishing, 1985)
- Paipanadikar V A & Arun Sud, *Emerging Pattern of Representation in the Indian Parliament* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research, 1981)
- Palanithurai G, 'The Role Orientations of the Members of VII Legislative Assembly of Tamilnadu' in *The Journal of Political Science* Vol.50, No.2, April-June, 1989)
- Palanithurai G, *Reaction and Response in Legislature* (Annamalai Nagar: Annamalai University, 1989)
- Palanithurai G, *Role Perceptions of Legislators: A Case Study of Tamilnadu* (Delhi: Konarak Publishers, 1991)
- Patterson Samuel C and John C Wahlke, *Comparative Legislative Behavior: Frontiers of Research* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972)
- Pendse D R, 'Deteriorating Situation' in *Seminar*, March, 1983.
- Polsby Nelson, 'Legislatures' in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby (Eds.), *Handbook of Political Science* Vol 5 (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975)
- Prabhavati V, *Perceptions, Motivations and Performance of Women Legislators: Andhra Pradesh State Legislature 1956-1983* (New Delhi: Classical Publishing, 1991)
- Prasad Anirudh, *Reservation Policy and Practice in India: A Means to an End* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep, 1991)
- Prasad Anirudh, *Centre and State Powers under Indian Federalism* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep, 1981)
- Puri Shashi Lata, *Legislative Elite in an Indian State (A case study of Rajasthan)* (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1978)
- Rajagopalan V, *The Political Economy of Agrarian Policies in Kerala: A Study of State Intervention in Agricultural Commodity Markets with particular reference to Dairy Markets* (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London, 1993)
- Ramachandran S, (Ed.), *Anna Speaks: At the Rajya Sabha 1962-66* (Bombay: Orient Longman, 1975)
- Rao V M and Abdul Aziz (Eds.), *Poverty Alleviation in India: Programmes and Action* (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing, 1989)

- Roach James A, (Ed.), *India 2000: The Next Fifteen Years* (Ahmedabad: Allied, 1987)
- Rostow Dankwart A, *A World of Nations: Problems of Political Modernization* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1967)
- Rudolph Lloyd I and Susanne H, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of Indian State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)
- Rudolph Lloyd I and Susanne H, *The Modernity of Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967)
- Rush Michael, 'Committees in the Canadian House of Commons' in John D Lees & Malcolm Shaw (Eds.), *Committees in Legislatures: A Comparative Analysis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979)
- Satia J K & Shireen J Jejeebhoy, *The Demographic Challenge: A Study of Four Large Indian States* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1991)
- Sen Gupta Bhabani, *Communism in Indian Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972)
- Seshadri K and S P Jain, *Panchayati Raj and Political Perception of Electorate* (Hydrabad: National Institute of Community Development, 1972)
- Shah Ghanshyam, 'Grass-Roots Mobilization in Indian Politics' in Atul Kohli (Ed.), *India's Democracy: An Analysis of Changing State Society Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988)
- Shakdhar S L, *The Law and Practice of Elections in India* (New Delhi: National Publishing, 1992)
- Sharma P D, *Legislative Elite in India: A Study in Political Socialization* (Kurukshetra: Vishal publications, 1984)
- Shils Edward, 'On the Comparative Study of New States' in Clifford Geertz (Ed.), *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* (New York: The Free Press, 1963)
- Shils Edward, 'Center and Periphery: An Idea and its Career' in Liah Greenfield and Michel Martin (Eds.), *Center: Ideas and Institutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988)
- Shils Edward, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975)

- Shils Edward, 'The Intellectual in the Political Development of the New States' in Harvey Kebschull (Ed.) *Politics in Transitional Societies: The Challenge of Change in Asia, Africa, and Latin America* (New York: Appleton, 1968)
- Shourie A, *Symptoms of Fascism* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1978)
- Shourie A, *Religion in Politics* (New Delhi, Roli Books, 1987)
- Singh Bhawani, *Council of States in India* (Merrut, UP: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1973)
- Singh J & Tiwari R K, (Eds.), *Managing Poverty Alleviation: Insights from the Field* (New Delhi: IIPA, 1988)
- Singh M P, 'The Congress in the 1980s and Beyond: Patterns of Recruitment, Strategies for Mobilization and Inter-Party Alignments' in Richard Sisson & Ramashray Ray (Eds.), *Diversity and Dominance in Indian Politics*, Vol.I (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1990)
- Singh M P (Ed.), *Lok Sabha Elections 1989: Indian Politics in 1990s* (Delhi: Kalinga Publications, 1992)
- Singh Ranbir, 'A Contest in the Hindi Belt: A Study of Haryana' in Subrata Mitra & J Chiriyankandath (Eds.), *Electoral Politics in India* (New Delhi: Segment Books, 1993)
- Singh Shubh N, *Centre State Relations in India: Major Irritants and Post-Sarkaria Review* (New Delhi: H K Publishers, 1990)
- Singh Yogendra, 'Changing Pattern of Social Stratification in India' in M N Srinivas et al. (Eds.), *Dimensions of Social Change in India* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1977)
- Singhvi L M, 'Parliament in Indian Political System' in Allan Kornberg & Lloyd Musolf (Eds.), *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970)
- Sisson Richard and Ramashray Ray, *Diversity and Dominance in Indian Politics*, Two Volumes (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1990)
- Sisson Richard & Lawrence Shrader, 'Social Representation and Political Integration in an Indian State: The Legislative Dimension' in Albert F Eldridge (Ed.), *Legislatures in Plural Societies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1977)
- Sisson Richard, 'Comparative Legislative Institutionalization: A Theoretical Exploration' in Allan Kornberg (Ed.), *Legislatures in Comparative Perspective* (New York: David Mckay, 1973)

- Siwach J R, *Dynamics of Indian Government and Politics*, Second revised edition (New Delhi: Sterling, 1990)
- Smith Geoffrey, 'Parliamentary Change in Britain' in Norman J Ornstein (Ed.), *The Role of the Legislature in Western Democracies* (Washington, DC: AEI, 1981)
- Smith Joel and Lloyd Musolf (Eds.), *Legislatures in Development: Dynamics of Change in New and Old States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979)
- Srinivasan K and S Mukerji (Eds.), *Dynamics of Population and Family Welfare in India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1979)
- Srinivasan K and P H Reddy, 'Peoples' Perceptions of Family Planning Incentives and Disincentives: Findings from a Survey of a Sample Population in Karnataka' in K Srinivasan & S Mukerji (Eds.), *Dynamics of Population and Family Welfare in India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1979)
- Srivastava Harish, 'A Study of Fertility Differentials Among Hindu and Muslim Women in Bhiwandi' in K Srinivasan & S Mukerji (Eds.), *Dynamics of Population and Family Welfare in India* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1979)
- Srivastava P K, *State Government and Politics in India* (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1991)
- Staley Eugene, *The Future of the Underdeveloped Countries* (Harper & Brothers, 1954)
- Stevenson T H, *Politics and Government* (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield Adams, 1973)
- Swarankar R C, *Political Elite: A Sociological Study of Legislators in Rajasthan* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1988)
- Tewary I N, *State Politics in India: A Study of Legislative System in Uttar Pradesh* (Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1985)
- Thomas P J, *The Role of Welfare Programmes in the Political Socialization of Scheduled Tribes in Attapady in Kerala* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kerala, 1992)
- Tikekar Maneesha Aroon, *Scheduled Caste legislators in Maharashtra: Socialization, Recruitment and Role in Modernization* (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Bombay, 1986)
- Toynbee Arnold, *East to West: A Journey Round the World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958)

- United Nations, *World Population Projections: Two Centuries of Population Growth 1950-2150* (New York: UN, 1992)
- Uphoff Norman T (Ed.), *Rural Development and Local Organization in Asia* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1982)
- Varshney Ashutosh, 'India: Liberalism versus Nationalism' in *Journal of Democracy*, July, 1992)
- Varshney Ashutosh, 'Contested Meanings: India's National Identity, Hindu Nationalism and the Politics of Anxiety' in *Daedalus*, Summer 1993.
- Vasil Raj, *Governing Singapore* (Singapore: Mandarin, 1992)
- Venkatasubbiah H, *Indian Economy since Independence* (London: Asia Publishing, 1961)
- Verba Sidney, 'Threats to Democracy: A Research Perspective' in *The Transition to Democracy* (Washington, DC: Agency for International Development, 1990)
- Verba Sidney, Norman Nie, and Jae-On Kim, *Participation and Political Equality: A Seven Nation Comparison* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1978)
- Verma S P, *Changing Pattern of Parliamentary Leadership in India* (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, 1965)
- Wade Robert, 'Politics and Graft' in Peter M Ward (Ed.), *Corruption, Development and Equality: Soft Touch or Hard Graft* (London: Routledge, 1989)
- Wahlke John, Eulau Heinz, Buchanan William, and Fergusan LeRoy, *The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior* (New York: John Wiley, 1962)
- Webster Neil, 'Panchayati Raj in West Bengal: Popular Participation for the People or the Party' in *Development and Change*, Vol.23, No.4, October, 1992.
- Weinbaum Marvin G, 'The Legislator as Intermediary: Integration of the Center and Periphery in Afghanistan' in Albert F Eldridge (Ed.), *Legislatures in Plural Societies: The Search for Cohesion in National Development* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1977)
- Weinbaum Marvin G, 'Classification and Change in Legislative Systems: with particular application to Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan' in Boynton and Kim (Eds.), *Legislative Systems in Developing Countries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1975)

- Weiner Myron, 'India: Two Political Cultures' in Lucien Pye and S Verba (Eds.), *Political Culture and Political Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965)
- Weiner Myron & Samuel Huntington (Eds.), *Understanding Political Development* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co., 1987)
- Weiner Myron, 'Political Integration and Political Development' in J L Finkle and R W Gable (Eds.), *Political Development and Social Change* (New York: John Wiley, 1966)
- Weiner Myron, *The Indian Paradox: Essays in Indian Politics* (New Delhi: Sage, 1989)
- Wertheim W F, *Evolution and Revolution* (England: Penguin Books, 1974)
- Wheare K C, *Modern Constitutions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966)
- Wheare K C, *Legislatures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963)
- White Graham, *The Ontario Legislature: A Political Analysis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989)
- Wood John R, (Ed.), *State Politics in Contemporary India: Crisis or Continuity* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1984)
- Woshinsky Oliver H, *The French Deputy: Incentives and Behavior in the National Assembly* (Lexington, MA: D C Heath & Co., 1973)