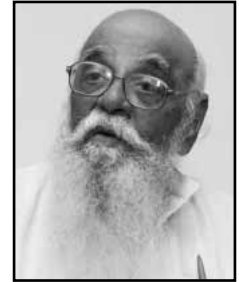


Small States



Prof. N. S. Ramaswamy *

Preface

Prof.N.S.Ramaswamy was passionate about making India a great country and a leading light of the world. He was inspired by Swami Vivekananda's prophecy that this would happen in the twenty-first century. The motive for such an ardent wish was an ethical impulse. Large masses of Indians should be given a chance to lead better lives; a chance, not only in terms of economics, but also to rise to such a level as to fulfill human potential to the maximum.

In order to make this possible, he identified the stumbling blocks in our society and polity. He found solutions to each, which are practical and possible, provided there is a will. He publicized these tirelessly.

Recent history of our country tells that if only his suggestions were given serious attention at national governance level, the tragedy of human loss and the turmoil in Andhra Pradesh could have been avoided.

- Editor

India can be compared to Europe in size and population. Our large States are as big, or bigger than European nations, such as Britain, France, Germany and Italy. 90 nations in the world have less than four million population, while many of our 540 districts have the same population. Our Districts are governed by a Collector, with 3 to 4 years of experience. New Zealand, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Albania and 50 others are administered by a Prime Minister, supported by a Cabinet. Moreover,

in most of the nations in the world, except Communist countries, economic and social development is carried out by the private sector, while the Government is mainly concerned only with Foreign Affairs, Defense, Public Administration, Finance and some regulatory activities. In India, however, the Centre and the States are involved in almost every economic activity, which imposes a heavy burden on the Government.

* From the writings of late Prof.N.S.Ramaswamy, Founder Director, IIM(Bangalore), and Management Guru, who spoke and wrote extensively on Professional Ethics in all areas of life. He was Patron of this journal.

Conflicts

Further, we are still economically and socially backward, with one third the population poor and 40% illiterate. They have to be brought up, which is another burden on the Government. Private sector will not be able to deliver services to them, as they are not profitable ventures. In addition, conflicts based on religion, caste and language cause law and order problems. Also, insurgency and separatist movements are a source of tension for the Centre. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ayodhya and such other conflict areas including the northern borders of the country, require attention. Government cannot handle such complex problems easily, if the Centre has to also shoulder Development responsibilities on such a large scale.

Size of States

Such inequality in size and population and development levels means in great difficulty for the Central Government. UP and Bihar, with 140 MPs, have been dominating the political central stage. Though the Constitution is federal in spirit and structure, in practice, it is more unitary. The Centre allocates bulk of development funds to the States. Equitable distribution of funds is not that easy, particularly when the political party ruling in the Centre will be different from those ruling the States.

Nation State

Though India was a cultural entity for 5000 years, it was the British conquest and rule that enabled India to become a modern nation State. As a nation, we are still young, compared to the European nations. Therefore, we have to

foster unity through an appropriate political economy system.

Linguism

Unfortunately, after Independence, India was divided on linguistic basis. Language is the greatest divider of people all over the world. Language is highly emotive, which can bring in conflicts and confrontation. European nations are formed on language basis, though they are all Christians. Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Pakistan broke on the basis of language cum other divisive lines. In order to gain popularity, Indian politicians whip up parochial feelings among their followers, based on language. This is a potential danger to India's unity.

Split the 10 large States

It is proposed that the ten large States be split into 27 smaller States, all uni-lingual, with 15 to 30 m population each. Such a division may entail large direct administrative expenditure. But that is nothing compared to enormous benefits that would accrue. BJP has all along been in favour of small States; so too the Congress. Smaller States are easier to govern and to develop, as has been proved by Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The proposed set-up is given below.

The 10 large States are to be split into 27 smaller States, taking into account sub regional identity and aspirations, such as Telangana, Vidarbha, Marathwada, Magadha, Mithila, Mahakosal etc. Present population (in millions), number of States proposed and the average population (in millions*) of the split States are given below:

* Old figures as at the time of writing the article.

A.P	76 ÷ 3 = 26
Gujarat	51 ÷ 2 = 26
M.P	50 ÷ 2 = 25
Rajasthan	57 ÷ 2 = 29
U.P	166 ÷ 5 = 33
Bihar	83 ÷ 3 = 28
Karnataka	52 ÷ 2 = 26
Maharashtra	97 ÷ 3 = 32
Tamil Nadu	62 ÷ 2 = 31
West Bengal	80 ÷ 3 = 27

There will be no change in the other 18 States and 3 Union Territories. Population (in millions) is given below:

Haryana	.....	21
Chattisgarh	.....	21
Nagaland	.....	2
Jharkhand	.....	27
Delhi	.....	14
Meghalaya	.....	2
Orissa	.....	37
J&K	.....	10
Manipur	.....	2
Assam	.....	27
Uttaranchal	.....	8
Mizoram	.....	1
Kerala	.....	32
H.P	.....	6
Arunachal	.....	1
Punjab	.....	24

Tripura	.....	3
Sikkim	.....	1
Pondicherry (U.T)		1
And'n& Nic'r (U.T)		
Lakshadweep (U.T)		

Thus we will have 34 States with population ranging between 21 and 37 million, which together would form 80% of the total population of 1014 million. The rest 9 and 3 U.T's will have a population of 20%.

Decentralise Development

One major advantage would be that Central Government, which is heavily burdened now with developmental responsibilities, can decentralize most development work to the States, by giving autonomy to the States for development. Centre can retain those functions which are inter-State in character. At the moment, it is not prudent to decentralize, because the large States, such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal, led by local leadership, may not listen to the sage advice of the Centre. A stage may come when some of the States may refuse to attend NDC meetings or implement what the Centre wants. At present, they are dependent on the Centre for development funds, and so they obey.

Centre-State relations

Also, it is difficult for the Central Government under one Party to maintain good relationship with those States, which are ruled by other political parties. The natural tendency of the States is to plead for more money and to blame the Centre all the time for their poor development.

Inter-State disputes

Another advantage would be that inter-State disputes, such as Belgaum, would be between South Maharashtra and Northern Karnataka. Cauvery will be between Tamil Nadu-B and Karnataka-B and not between Tamilians and Kannadigas. Disputes would transcend linguistic loyalties.

City States

Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai should be made City States, adding on to them the surrounding areas. These metro cities have been developed with resources from the whole nation. The present tendency of the local people claiming all the benefits of growth of these areas may lead to tension, as it happened in 1969, when Shiva Sena resented the presence of south Indians.

After leaving responsibilities to the States, Centre can concentrate on governance of the country, which is not receiving sufficient attention now due to preoccupation with development problems. One third of India is still very backward. When Telengana and Vidarbha are formed, they will have more motivation in developing their States.

Inequality

Inequality in size of States will only bring tension, particularly in respect of Centre-State and Inter-state relationships. One major reason for the backwardness of some districts is that development effort does not reach areas far off from the State capital. In erstwhile Madras and Bombay Provinces, backward districts were those which were away from the State capitals.

Small States will ensure more equitable development. They can be better managed too.

Sub-regional Loyalties

Smaller States would satisfy sub-State regional aspirations, as in Telengana and Vidarbha. Linguistic parochialism will be reduced. Small States can be easily disciplined by the Centre, which would become a real arbitrator in Inter-State disputes. Centre-State relations will be smoother. Development responsibility can be decentralised to States, and Centre can concentrate on governance. There will be room for 20 more CMs. Twenty more capitals will come into being, thus reducing congestion in the present capitals. Legislatures will be more compact. The extra cost of administration will be more than offset by the enormous economic and social benefits. Finally, India's unity will be strengthened.



The following passages show that the Vedanta, while recognizing the dangerous nature of the senses, asks us to keep them in good trim and under bridle.

Know the self to be sitting in the chariot, the body to be the chariot, the intellect (buddhi) the charioteer, and the mind the reins.

The senses they call the horses, the objects of the senses their roads. When He (the highest Self) is in union with the body, the senses and the mind, then wise people call him the enjoyer.

He who has no understanding and whose mind (the reins) is never firmly held, his senses are unmanageable like vicious horses of a charioteer.

But he who has understanding and whose mind is always firmly held, his senses are under control like good horses of a charioteer. *(Kathopanishad, verses 3 to 6).*