

STATE POLITICS IN INDIA

Guidelines For State Politics in India course.

1. **Sample Notes Only:** Please remember that the notes provided are samples and not comprehensive. They are designed to help you understand key concepts and provide a starting point for your studies, but they do not cover all the material you'll need for the exam. For a complete understanding of the subject, it is essential to attend class regularly and engage with all lectures and materials provided. These notes supplement, but do not replace, the detailed content discussed in class.
2. **Attend Lectures:** Regular attendance at lectures is crucial. Lectures offer valuable insights, explanations, and discussions that can enhance your understanding of the subject matter.
3. **Read Assigned Texts:** Engage with the textbooks and readings suggested during class.
4. **Use AI for Summarizing:** If the material is lengthy or complex, you can use AI (like ChatGPT or DeepSeek) to help simplify or summarize the content. For example, you can copy the text and ask the AI to condense it into a more manageable form, focusing on the most important points. But don't use AI directly for making notes.

UNIT 1

SYLLABUS

1. **State Politics in India: development, features and determinants**
2. **Theoretical Frameworks of State Politics in India**
3. **Approaches: Institutional and Political Economy Approach**

Introduction to State Politics in India

State politics in India is very important to study because it helps us understand how the country works. India has 29 states, and each state is like a small country with its own culture, people, and economy. These states are not just parts of India; they are powerful units that affect the lives of people every day. They handle things like schools, hospitals, police, and farming, which are very important for citizens.

When we study state politics, we learn how states help in running the country. Many national leaders, like Lal Bahadur Shastri and P.V. Narasimha Rao, even Narendra Modi started their careers in state politics. This shows that states are like training grounds for national leaders. Also, after the Congress party's power declined, regional parties and state leaders became very important in national politics.

States also play a big role in implementing national plans. The central government makes policies, but it is the states that actually carry them out. For example, states manage education,

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agriculture, and local taxes. This means that the success of national plans depends on how well the states work.

Each state is different. Some states, like Kerala and Tamil Nadu, have strong political participation, while others, like Bihar and Odisha, face challenges. By studying these differences, we can learn why some states do better than others and how politics works at the local level.

In short, studying state politics helps us understand how India's democracy works. It shows us how states and the central government work together and how they affect people's lives. This makes state politics a very important subject to study.

Q. Development of State Politics in India

The development of state politics in India has been viewed differently by scholars. M.P. Singh argues that state politics was neglected in the early decades after independence (1950s–1960s) due to the dominance of the nationalist spirit, Congress Party's hegemony, and centralization of power under Nehru, Indra Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, which overshadowed state-level issues. In contrast, Sudha Pai highlights that state politics did receive attention during this period, particularly through studies on state reorganization, linguistic movements, and elections, though these were often limited to formal-legal approaches. Pai's view is more convincing because the 1950s marked significant events like the creation of linguistic states (e.g., Andhra Pradesh) and state-level elections, which laid the groundwork for understanding state politics. Therefore, we will study the development of state politics in India starting from the 1950s, dividing it into three phases: the first phase (1950s–1960s), the second phase (1970s), and the third phase (1980s onwards). This phased approach reflects the evolving significance of state politics in India's federal system.

The first phase (1950s–1960s)

The 1950s and 1960s were a period of **Congress dominance** in Indian state politics. The Indian National Congress (INC), which led the freedom struggle, controlled both the central and most state governments. Policies like land reforms and community development were designed by the Centre but implemented by states, creating a top-down system. However, this centralized approach often ignored regional needs, leading to uneven results. For example, land reforms faced resistance from local elites in many states, limiting their effectiveness. Scholars like Myron Weiner and Iqbal Narain contributed significantly to understanding this phase. Weiner's work, particularly his book "State Politics in India" (1968), provided a comparative analysis of state-level political processes, emphasizing the diversity of state politics and its independence from national trends. Narain's studies focused on the institutional and historical aspects of state politics, highlighting how regional identities and socio-economic conditions shaped political systems.

During this time, **regional and ideological movements** began to challenge Congress's control. In South India, the anti-Hindi agitation in Tamil Nadu and the demand for linguistic states, like Andhra Pradesh, highlighted the power of regional identity. Ideological parties, such as the Communist Party in Kerala and West Bengal, pushed for workers' rights and land reforms, while the Jana Sangh (precursor to the BJP) mobilized support in North India on issues like cow protection and Hindi as the national language. These movements showed that regional and ideological issues could not be ignored. Weiner and Narain's works further illuminated these

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dynamics, with Weiner focusing on electoral behavior and party competition, and Narain examining the role of caste, language, and ethnicity in shaping state politics.

The **1967 elections** marked a turning point, as Congress lost power in several states, including Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Punjab. Regional parties like the DMK in Tamil Nadu and coalition governments emerged, ending Congress's one-party dominance. This shift signaled the rise of regionalism and state-specific issues in Indian politics, paving the way for a more diverse and competitive political landscape. Weiner and Narain's contributions were crucial in understanding this transition. Weiner's emphasis on comparative state studies and Narain's focus on historical and institutional factors provided a framework for analyzing the decline of Congress dominance and the rise of regional forces. Their work laid the foundation for future studies on state politics, highlighting the importance of regional diversity in shaping India's federal democracy.

The Second Phase (1970s),

The 1970s marked a transformative phase in Indian state politics, characterized by the rise of regional forces and the decline of Congress dominance. This period saw the emergence of strong regional leaders and parties, particularly from agrarian backgrounds, who challenged the centralized control of the Congress Party. The Green Revolution empowered wealthy farmers (kulaks) in states like Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Bihar, leading to the formation of regional parties like the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) that focused on farmers' issues. Leaders like Charan Singh and Karpoori Thakur gained prominence, demanding greater state autonomy and reshaping centre-state relations.

The imposition of Emergency (1975–1977) further intensified demands for state autonomy, as opposition leaders united to form the Janata Party, which defeated Congress in the 1977 elections. Regional parties like the DMK in Tamil Nadu and the Left Front in West Bengal pushed for reforms, such as the Rajamannar Committee and West Bengal Memorandum, which called for greater fiscal powers and restrictions on central interference. These developments increased the scope of state politics, empowering marginalized groups and laying the foundation for coalition politics and regionalism in India. This phase highlighted the growing influence of state-level politics in shaping national governance.

The Third Phase (1980s onwards)

The 1980s onwards marked a significant transformation in Indian state politics, characterized by the assertion of identities, the impact of globalization, and the rise of insurgencies. These developments reshaped the political landscape, making state politics more dynamic and complex.

The assertion of identities became a defining feature of this phase, as marginalized groups like Dalits, OBCs, and tribal communities demanded political representation and social justice. Parties like the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and movements such as the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) emerged, focusing on caste-based and agrarian issues. Additionally, demands for reservation and the creation of new states like Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh gained momentum. This period saw the rise of regional parties and coalition governments, making Indian politics more inclusive but also more fragmented.

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The impact of globalization, particularly after the economic liberalization of 1991, further transformed state politics. States like Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu attracted significant investments, while others like Bihar and Odisha lagged behind, creating economic disparities. Globalization allowed states to act more independently, negotiating directly with international donors and companies. This shift reduced the central government's dominance and increased the role of regional parties like the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Biju Janata Dal (BJD), which became key players in national coalition politics.

The rise of insurgencies added another layer of complexity to state politics. In the North-East, groups like the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) demanded autonomy or independence, leading to prolonged conflicts. The Punjab insurgency of the 1980s, driven by the Khalistan movement, sought a separate Sikh state, resulting in widespread violence. Similarly, Jammu and Kashmir witnessed ongoing insurgencies, challenging the Indian state's authority. These conflicts highlighted the tensions between regional aspirations and national integration, further complicating the political landscape.

Determinants of State Politics in India

The main determinants of state politics in India, as discussed by B.L. Fadia in the chapter 'State Politics in India' from the book 'Indian Government and Politics', can be summarized in simple terms with a bit more detail:

1. **Constitutional Framework:** The Indian Constitution defines the powers of states and the central government. While states have authority over certain areas, the central government holds overall superiority, especially in conflicts. For example, during emergencies, the central government can impose President's Rule in a state, reducing its autonomy.
2. **Economic Factors:** The level of economic development, availability of resources, and industrialization in a state shape its politics. Wealthier states like Maharashtra and Gujarat often have more bargaining power with the central government. States with strong economies can push for more autonomy, while poorer states like Bihar and Odisha often depend on central funds, limiting their political influence.
3. **Socio-Cultural Factors:** States differ in social structures, such as caste, language, and religion. For example, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have strong non-Brahmin movements, while Bihar and Uttar Pradesh face caste-based political instability. These social factors influence voting patterns, party formation, and political stability. For instance, caste-based parties like the BSP in Uttar Pradesh have emerged to represent marginalized groups.
4. **Bureaucracy:** The strength and efficiency of a state's bureaucracy impact its politics. States like Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, with strong administrative traditions, tend to have more stable politics. In contrast, states like Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, which lack strong bureaucratic systems, often face fragmented politics and slower development.
5. **Political Factors:** The relationship between the central and state governments, the personalities of the Prime Minister and Chief Minister, and the party in power influence state politics. For example, a strong Chief Minister like N.T. Rama Rao in Andhra Pradesh can shape state politics independently, while a weak Chief Minister may rely more on central support.

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6. **Geographical Factors:** The geography of a state, including its size, terrain, and location, also affects its politics. For example, hilly states like Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh face different challenges compared to plains states like Punjab. States with difficult terrain, like those in the North-East, often experience insurgencies and demands for greater autonomy due to their isolation from the mainland.

Q. Features of State Politics in India

State politics in India is shaped by several unique features.

1. One of the most important is the **amalgamation of traditional and modern language**. While modern political systems like elections and laws are in place, traditional social structures like caste and community still play a big role. For example, politicians may talk about development and policy, but they also appeal to caste-based loyalties to win votes.
2. **Caste** is another dominant factor in state politics. It influences voting behavior and political strategies. In states like Uttar Pradesh, parties often choose candidates based on caste to attract specific voter groups. This shows how deeply caste is embedded in the political system.
3. India also has a **competitive party system**, where many parties compete for power, and no single party dominates for long. For instance, in Tamil Nadu, regional parties like DMK and AIADMK have successfully challenged the Congress party's dominance, creating a vibrant political landscape.
4. **Factionalism** is a common feature, especially within major parties like the Congress. Internal conflicts often lead to splits and power struggles. For example, in states like Madhya Pradesh, different groups within the Congress fight for control, leading to frequent changes in leadership and policies.
5. Another feature is **segmental politics**, where political issues are often local and don't affect other states. For instance, the Telangana statehood movement was a local issue that didn't directly impact politics in states like Bihar or Gujarat.
6. **Emerging regionalism** has become a significant trend, with regional parties and leaders gaining power. Leaders like N.T. Rama Rao in Andhra Pradesh and Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal have built strong regional parties that focus on state-specific issues.
7. **Changes in state leadership patterns** are also common, with frequent shifts due to defections and internal conflicts. For example, in Karnataka, frequent defections have led to multiple changes in the Chief Minister in a short period, showing how unstable state politics can be.
8. Finally, **political instability** is a recurring issue, with governments often collapsing due to defections and coalition politics. In 1967, many state governments fell due to defections, highlighting the fragile nature of state politics.

Q. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF STATE POLITICS IN INDIA

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1. Systemic framework of State politics in India.

The systemic framework is a widely used approach to study state politics in India. It focuses on understanding political systems as a whole, including their institutions, structures, and processes. These elements interact, conflict, and adjust within a social and political environment, maintaining a balance that keeps the system stable and resilient. This framework has been applied by several scholars to analyze Indian politics, both at the national and state levels.

Rajni Kothari's View: State Politics within the Indian System

Rajni Kothari, in his book **Politics in India**, used the systemic framework to study Indian politics. He argued that state politics should be analyzed within the larger framework of the Indian political system. According to Kothari, the Indian Constitution provides a common institutional structure for all states, making it possible to study state politics as part of a unified national system. He also emphasized the importance of the Congress System, where the dominance of the Congress party at both the national and state levels created an interconnected political structure. Kothari believed that this interconnectedness made it necessary to study state politics within the broader context of the Indian political system.

Myron Weiner's Critique: Diversity in State Politics

Myron Weiner, however, challenged Kothari's view. He argued that the internal political patterns of states vary significantly, and it is not enough to study them only within the larger Indian system. Weiner pointed out that some states, like West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala, have active Communist movements, while others do not. Similarly, political participation—measured by voting rates, party organization, and voluntary associations—varies widely across states. For example, states like Kerala and Punjab have high voter turnout (over 65%), while states like Orissa and Bihar have much lower participation (23% and 47%, respectively). Weiner also highlighted differences in factionalism within parties and the strength of opposition parties across states. He believed that Indian states could be studied both as microcosms (constituent units of a larger system) and macrocosms (large enough to be studied as independent systems). Weiner focused on two main aspects: (a) the social and economic environment in which politics occurs, and (b) the performance of state governments.

Despite his contributions, Weiner's approach has been criticized for focusing mostly on the eight larger states of India and for being influenced by the political science traditions of the United States, particularly the work of V.O. Key. Critics argue that his framework may not fully capture the unique complexities of Indian state politics.

Iqbal Narain's Three-Dimensional Framework

In contrast to Weiner, Iqbal Narain developed a more detailed and context-sensitive systemic framework for studying state politics in India. Narain's approach is based on three key dimensions: contextual, structural, and operational.

Iqbal Narain's three-dimensional framework for studying state politics in India is a comprehensive approach that focuses on the contextual, structural, and operational aspects of political systems. The contextual dimension examines the historical, social, and economic background of a state, including factors like its history, geographical location, social diversity (caste, religion, language), economic development, human resources, education levels, and

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urbanization. For example, states like Tamil Nadu, with their strong linguistic identity, or Uttar Pradesh, with its complex caste dynamics, have unique contexts that shape their politics.

The structural dimension looks at the formal and informal political structures within a state. This includes the roles of constitutional offices like the Governor and Chief Minister, the functioning of political institutions such as parties, pressure groups, and elections, and the overall administrative framework. For instance, the role of the Chief Minister in Maharashtra or the influence of regional parties in West Bengal highlights how structural elements impact state politics.

Finally, the operational dimension focuses on the behavior and functioning of political actors. This includes how leaders perceive and perform their roles, their political behavior in terms of actions and decisions, and the specific tasks tied to their responsibilities. For example, the decision-making process of a Chief Minister or the functioning of local leaders in rural areas demonstrates how operational dynamics influence political outcomes.

Together, these three dimensions provide a holistic framework for analyzing state politics, considering the context, structures, and actions that shape the political system in each state.

2. Confederation-Building Framework

The Confederation-Building Framework is a way of understanding and addressing the challenges faced by regions or communities that feel marginalized or ignored within a larger nation-state. This framework is particularly useful for studying self-determination movements, such as demands for autonomy, independence, or greater rights, especially in regions located on the edges (periphery) of a country. It was developed as a response to the modernization or development perspective, which often assumes that all regions should follow the same path of progress and integration into the nation-state. Scholars like Sanjib Baruah, in his book 'India Against Itself', have used this framework to analyze conflicts in regions like North-East India, Jammu and Kashmir, and Punjab.

The key idea behind the Confederation-Building Framework is that the nation-state (a unified country with a single identity) is not a natural entity but a constructed one. This construction often ignores the unique needs, cultures, and perspectives of smaller states or regions. For example, in India, the central government's policies sometimes treat smaller states (like those in the North-East) as less important, leading to feelings of neglect and resentment. This framework argues that such an approach is biased and fails to address the root causes of conflicts.

Instead of forcing regions to conform to a single Indian identity, the Confederation-Building Framework suggests that India should move towards genuine federalism, where power is shared more equally between the central government and the states. This means giving more autonomy to states, respecting their unique identities, and building stronger relationships between the regions and the central government. For instance, in Nagaland or Mizoram, granting greater autonomy and involving local communities in decision-making can help build trust and reduce conflicts.

The framework also emphasizes balancing sub-nationalism (pride in one's regional identity, like being Naga or Assamese) with Pan-Indianism (pride in being Indian). It argues that both can coexist if the central government respects and accommodates regional identities. For example, in

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Jammu and Kashmir, adopting a more inclusive approach that respects the unique identity and aspirations of the people can help resolve decades of conflict.

In conclusion, the Confederation-Building Framework offers a more inclusive and respectful approach to governance, where the unique identities and aspirations of smaller states are acknowledged and accommodated. By moving towards genuine federalism, India can build stronger relationships between its diverse regions and create a more harmonious and united nation.

3. Social Capital Framework

The Social Capital Framework is a way of understanding how relationships, trust, and cooperation among people in a society can improve public life, strengthen democracy, and reduce conflicts. The concept became popular after political scientist Robert Putnam published his book 'Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy'. Putnam argued that societies with strong social capital—built through networks, trust, and shared values—are more likely to have effective democracies and peaceful communities.

Social capital refers to the connections, trust, and shared values that exist among people in a society. These connections can be through families, friends, community groups, or formal associations. For example, if people in a neighborhood trust each other and work together to solve problems, they have high social capital. Societies with high social capital tend to have stronger democracies because people are more engaged, informed, and willing to work together for the common good. For example, in a community with strong social capital, people are more likely to vote, participate in local governance, and hold leaders accountable.

Ashutosh Varshney, in his book 'Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India', used the social capital framework to study why ethnic riots occur in some cities but not in others. He found that riots are less likely in cities where Hindus and Muslims have strong associational ties (e.g., working together in trade unions or business associations). In contrast, riots are more likely in cities where such ties are weak. For example, in Ahmedabad, where Hindus and Muslims rarely interact in associational settings, riots have been frequent. In contrast, in cities like Surat, where people from both communities work together in industries, riots are rare.

In conclusion, the Social Capital Framework helps us understand how trust, networks, and shared values can improve public life, strengthen democracy, and reduce conflicts. By studying examples like ethnic riots in India or community development in Kerala, we see how social capital can make societies more peaceful and democratic.

4. Marxist Framework

The Marxist Framework is a way of understanding society, politics, and history through the lens of class struggle and economic structures. It was developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 19th century and remains one of the most influential theories for analyzing social and political issues. At its core, Marxism argues that society is divided into two main classes: the bourgeoisie (those who own the means of production, like factories and land) and the proletariat (the working class who sell their labor). The framework emphasizes that history is shaped by

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conflicts between these classes, and that the economy (or base) determines the political, cultural, and social institutions (or superstructure).

One of the key ideas of Marxism is the concept of exploitation. Marx argued that the bourgeoisie exploits the proletariat by paying workers less than the value of what they produce, leading to inequality and oppression. Over time, Marx believed that the working class would become aware of this exploitation and rise up in a revolution to overthrow the capitalist system. This revolution would lead to a classless society where resources are shared equally, and the state would eventually wither away.

In the context of Indian politics, the Marxist framework has been used to study issues like land reforms, agrarian movements, and trade union struggles. For example, scholars like Achin Vanaik and Charles Bettelheim have applied Marxist analysis to understand how economic structures shape political power in India. In states like Kerala and West Bengal, Marxist parties have played a significant role in advocating for the rights of workers and peasants. For instance, the land reforms in Kerala, which redistributed land from wealthy landlords to poor farmers, were driven by Marxist ideology.

However, the Marxist framework has been criticized for focusing too much on economic factors and ignoring other important aspects like caste, religion, and culture. For example, in states like Uttar Pradesh or Bihar, caste often plays a more significant role in politics than class. Despite these limitations, the Marxist framework remains a powerful tool for analyzing how economic structures influence politics and society.

5.Subaltern Framework

The Subaltern Framework is a way of understanding history and politics from the perspective of marginalized and oppressed groups, often referred to as the subaltern. The term subaltern comes from the Latin word 'subalternus', meaning subordinate, and was popularized by the Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci. However, the framework was further developed by the Subaltern Studies Collective, a group of South Asian scholars led by Ranajit Guha. This framework focuses on the voices and experiences of those who are excluded from mainstream historical and political narratives, such as peasants, tribal communities, lower castes, and women.

The key idea of the Subaltern Framework is that marginalized groups have their own autonomous consciousness and agency. They are not merely passive victims of oppression but active participants in resisting domination and shaping their own destinies. For example, tribal movements against displacement or Dalit struggles for equality are seen as expressions of subaltern agency. The framework also critiques elite historiography, which often ignores or misrepresents the subaltern. Instead, it seeks to recover the history from below by focusing on the experiences and struggles of ordinary people.

In the context of Indian politics, the Subaltern Framework has been used to study movements like the Naxalite uprising, Dalit politics, and tribal resistance. For instance, in states like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, tribal communities have organized against displacement caused by mining and industrialization. These movements are not just about economic exploitation but also about cultural and ecological rights, reflecting the autonomous consciousness of the subaltern. Similarly, the rise of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in Uttar Pradesh, which mobilizes Dalits and lower castes, exemplifies subaltern resistance to upper-caste dominance.

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The Subaltern Framework also draws on Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony, which explains how the ruling class maintains power by shaping cultural norms and values. For example, in India, the dominance of upper-caste narratives in education and media has marginalized Dalit and tribal voices. The Subaltern Framework challenges this hegemony by centering the perspectives of marginalized groups.

However, the framework has been criticized for sometimes overemphasizing the autonomy of subaltern groups and neglecting the role of external forces like political parties or NGOs. Despite these limitations, it remains a powerful tool for understanding the struggles of marginalized communities and challenging dominant narratives.

Approaches of state politics in India

Institutional Approach to State Politics in India

The institutional approach focuses on how formal and informal institutions shape political behavior and governance. Institutions are the rules, structures, and practices that guide how governments function. Formal institutions include constitutions, laws, and government bodies, while informal institutions are unwritten norms like traditions, caste, or regional identities. In India, state politics is deeply influenced by both types of institutions, making this approach useful for understanding how states govern themselves and interact with the central government.

To study state politics in India using the institutional approach, we first examine formal institutions. The Indian Constitution divides powers between the central and state governments, giving states authority over areas like health, education, and agriculture. Each state has a government led by a Chief Minister and a State Legislature that makes laws. However, the central government can influence states through mechanisms like the Governor's office, which often leads to conflicts, especially when different parties rule the state and center. State Legislatures, though crucial for lawmaking, often face challenges like disruptions and weak oversight, limiting their effectiveness.

Next, we look at informal institutions, which play a significant role in shaping state politics. Caste, for example, is a powerful informal institution in India. Political parties use caste to mobilize voters, and caste-based reservations influence policy-making. States like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are heavily shaped by caste dynamics. Regional identities also matter, with states like Tamil Nadu and Punjab having strong regional parties that reflect local culture and aspirations. Additionally, practices like clientelism, where politicians exchange favors for political support, undermine governance and encourage corruption.

The institutional approach also allows us to compare states. For instance, Kerala's strong local governance institutions and high social development contrast with Uttar Pradesh's caste-based politics and weak governance. Similarly, Gujarat's business-friendly policies and efficient bureaucracy have driven economic growth, while Bihar struggles with poor infrastructure and weak institutions. These comparisons highlight how institutional design impacts development and political outcomes.

However, state politics in India faces challenges. Center-State relations are often tense, with states complaining about insufficient financial autonomy and central interference. Corruption and the criminalization of politics further weaken governance, as informal practices like patronage overshadow formal rules.

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Political Economy Approach of State Politics in India

The political economy approach examines how power, resources, and policies interact to shape economic and political outcomes, focusing on who benefits and who is left behind. In the context of Indian state politics, this approach helps us understand how historical, social, and economic factors influence development, governance, and inequality. Scholars like James Manor, Lloyd I. Rudolph, Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, and Pranab Bardhan have used this framework to analyze the complex dynamics of India's states.

James Manor focuses on the role of state leadership and governance in driving development. He argues that strong state-level leadership, as seen in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, has led to better outcomes in health, education, and infrastructure. In contrast, states like Bihar and Odisha have struggled due to weak governance, corruption, and lack of resources.

The Rudolphs introduce the concepts of command polity and demand polity to explain the dual nature of India's political system. In a command polity, the state imposes policies from the top down, as seen during Nehru's era of centralized planning. In contrast, a demand polity emerges when societal pressures, often expressed through elections, protests, or caste-based mobilization, dominate policy-making. This shift has been particularly evident in states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where caste-based parties like the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) have used grassroots mobilization to influence state policies. The Rudolphs also discuss the rise of bullock capitalists—middle peasants with small to medium landholdings who became politically influential after the Green Revolution. These farmers, who form a significant voting bloc, often use their electoral power to demand subsidies and other benefits, shaping state agricultural policies. Additionally, the Rudolphs highlight the transition to a federal market economy post-1991, where states gained more autonomy to attract investments and promote industries, leading to increased competition but also regional disparities.

Pranab Bardhan emphasizes the unequal distribution of power in India, where a small elite—comprising big business owners, wealthy farmers, top bureaucrats, and unionized workers—dominates decision-making. This elite is highly fragmented, with different groups pulling in different directions, making it difficult to coordinate on long-term goals like infrastructure development or education reform. Bardhan also highlights the collective action problem, where the elite's inability to agree on shared goals often leads to short-term populist policies rather than sustainable development. He notes that while India's state has significant power, it is not a strong state capable of sticking to long-term policies, as it often succumbs to populist pressures and the demands of various interest groups. Bardhan also discusses the importance of decentralization in making the state more responsive to local needs. He argues that while the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments aimed to empower local governments like panchayats, effective decentralization has been limited to a few states like Kerala and West Bengal, where prior land reforms and political awareness movements have weakened local elites. Bardhan stresses that decentralization, along with better governance and inclusive policies, is crucial for addressing regional disparities and ensuring equitable development.

Together, these scholars provide a comprehensive understanding of the political economy of Indian states. They show how power, caste, federalism, and globalization interact to shape state-level development and governance. While states like Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have leveraged their autonomy to attract investments and promote industries, others like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh continue to struggle with weak institutions and fragmented politics. The political economy

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approach highlights the need for better governance, inclusive policies, and effective decentralization to address these challenges and ensure more equitable development across India's states.

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State Politics in India by Sudia Pai

State Politics in India Myrion Weiner

State Politics in India by Iqbal Narian

IGNOU Study Material

“*State Politics in India*” Chapter in B.L Fadia’s Book **Govt. & Politics in India**

EXTRA TOPICS FOR THIS UNIT

1. STATE INTEGRATION AND FORMATION.

Study integration of princely states in India by using these two links

<https://vajiramandravi.com/quest-upsc-notes/integration-of-princely-states-of-india/>

<https://www.drishtiias.com/to-the-points/paper1/integration-of-princely-states-after-independence>

For topic **formation of Indian states**. You can study this from book INDIAN POLITY BY LAXMIKANT in chapter 5 title “*Union and its Territory*”