
UNIT 18 ETHNIC MOVEMENTS

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18.1 INTRODUCTION

The overwhelming majority of societies today are multiethnic and multicultural. Out of some 190 nation states listed in official sources, 150 such states have four or more ethnic groups within their boundaries. Most of these are increasingly confronted with minority groups demanding recognition of their identity and accommodation of their cultural differences. In a survey of such groups, Ted Gurr in his study in 1993 singled out 233 minority ethnic groups who are at “risk”. By this he meant groups that, in the post-World War II period, have either taken political action on behalf of their collective discrimination or both. Hence they are actually or potentially engaged in inter-ethnic conflict. Of these 233 groups, only 27, or about 12 percent have no record of political organisation, protest, rebellion or other form of intercommunal conflict since 1945. Gurr also pointed out that, out of 127 countries in the world that he examined, 75 percent had at least one, and many had more, highly politicised minorities. As such ethnic tensions and movements have become a major source of violent and non-violent conflicts. If around the world, so many multiethnic states are in trouble, it is obvious that there is a need to understand the causes behind these movements and their nature and type. Such an understanding can also help in looking for means and mechanisms for conflict resolutions. A large number scholars the world over are undertaking such studies. In this unit we will have a look at these.

18.2 ETHNONATIONALISM

In the preceding unit you have already studied the meaning of ethnicity. The term has some thing common with nation. As Walker Cannot writes, in its pristine sense a nation

refers to a group of people who believe that they are ancestrally related. It is the group that can be aroused, stimulated to action, by appeals to common ancestors and to blood-bond. In this context nationalism, as properly used, does not connote loyalty to the state; that loyalty is properly termed patriotism. Nationalism connote loyalty to one's nation, one's extended family. One can therefore speak of an English or Welsh nationalism but not of a British one. Cannor, therefore, suggests that two loyalties represent two different orders of things, loyalty to state is socio-political in nature, and is based in large part on rational self-interest. Loyalty to nation is more intuitive than rational, and is predicated upon a sense of consanguinity – common ancestry. Ethno national movements therefore, are movements conducted in the name of the ethnic groups which have a sense of being a national group.

Ethnic groups, which are also considered to be minorities, in states generally are of three types. National minorities, Immigrant ethnic groups and Refugee groups. The National minorities consist of the original inhabitants of the State. They might have been incorporated into a larger state from earlier being self-governing groups at particular time of history as a result of empire building, creating new states by colonial powers or through process of integration through understandings or treaties. National minorities can also be groups having come into existence as a result of founding of new religions or conversions to a religion that had come from outside and in due course developed a sense of its separate identity. Immigrant ethnic groups are those who had left their national community and come to another state as individuals or families in search of jobs etc. and in due course formed associations of immigrants of same culture or religion. Refugee groups are similar to immigrant ethnic groups with only difference that they had come to another state by fear of conditions in their own countries.

Studies have shown that generally it is the first type of ethnic groups which are involved in ethnonationalism. It is more so with the groups which are concentrated in some part of the territory of the state, which they consider as their homeland. Most states in the world are not just multiethnic but multihomelands as well. With the principal exception of a few immigrant societies such as Argentina, Australia and the United States, the land masses of the world are divided into ethnic homeland, territories whose names reflect a particular people. Catalonia, Croatia, England, Finland, Iboland, Ireland, Kurdistan, Mizoland, Mongolia, Nagaland, Pakitunistan, Poland, Scotland, Swaziland, Sweden, Tibet, Uzbekistan etc. are examples of homelands of ethnic groups.

To the people who have lent their name to the area, the homeland is much more than a territory. The emotional attachment is reflected in such widely used descriptions as the native land, the fatherland, this sacred soil, the ancestral land, this hallowed place, the motherland, land of our fathers, and not the least the homeland, In the case of a homeland. territory becomes intermeshed with notions of ancestry and family. The emotional attachment to the homeland derives from perceptions of it has the cultural earth and, very often, as the geographic cradle of the ethnonational group. Therefore it is for the homeland that ethnonational groups demand greater autonomy or full independence. However, it is not only the concentration of ethnic groups in specific territories that causes ethnic movements. Territorial concentration provides homeland perception and an easy manifestation for expression of grievances in nationalist language. Reasons for the emergence of ethnic movements however are various.

18.3 FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR ETHNIC MOVEMENTS

As has already been mentioned above, ethnic consciousness and conflicts are pervasive around the world. Pakistan, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia have already been disintegrated. From Australian aboriginals to the Welsh, from the Armenians to the Tamils from the Ainu to the Yanomani, the ethnics around the world are mobilizing and engaging themselves in political action, sometimes in violent conflict and confrontation, to establish their identities, to defend their rights and privileges, to present their grievances and to ensure their survival. In fact many societies which were considered models of integration before Second World War, have subsequently witnessed a series of ethnic upheavals. The old paradigm that predicted that factors inherent in modernization including economic development, urbanization, growing rates of literacy and education as well as advancements in science and technology, would inevitably lead to the demise of the role of ethnicity, religion or culture in politics, stands changed.

18.3.1 Modernisation and Ethnicity

In the operational sense, modernisation means the attainment of relatively higher levels of variables, such as education, per capita income, urbanisation, political participation, industrial employment, media participation, etc. As already stated, in early modernising theory, ethnic identity referred to traditional obstacles which were supposed to disappear in the course of development.

However, the experience of the last decades has shown that these theories of progressive integration of peoples were seriously flawed. While, to begin with, there was such developments and modernisation brought in uniformity but in the course of time, it threw up its own contradictions and divergent elements, of which national minorities were a principal expression, both in already developed and newly developing societies.

In advanced industrial societies, particularly, modernisation appears to lead to a personality level void, which is also termed by some as alienation and by others simply as rootlessness. In part, alienation may arise from the work situation, the impersonalisation of a bureaucratized, formalised and urbanised existence within the framework of an excessive centralised state power structure. The modern welfare state, in addition to its role as protector has taken upon itself the role of a provider for its citizenry. Consequently, there has been increasing state penetration in the civil society as well as centralisation of initiatives and resources on the one hand and the rising expectations of the people from the state on the other. The state has become responsible for the regulation of practically all aspects of socio-economic life, and the visibility of the state's regulatory hand has made it the new focus and arena of operations and distributional conflicts.

This, Antony E. Alcock points out, has two effects. First, the more the governments have intervened in the lives of their citizens, the more distant from them have they become, since the less has been their need to heed. The bureaucratic apparatus of the State stands between the individual citizen and the makers of the decision that govern his life. His ability to influence those decisions has declined as swiftly as the capability

and authority of the government at whose knee he presses his suit. It should not be surprising that so many people have begun to switch their loyalty from a seemingly unresponsive national government to institutions which are more accessible or effective, if these exist, or to call for them if they do not. This includes a return to traditional or small group values. Of course ethnic identity here per se does not assume antagonistic or incompatible traits, because it is a product of weakening ties in industrialised, urbanised areas which has led to a sense of alienation that is self-directed and not other-directed.

In post-colonial societies the early nationalist leadership in its passion for modernisation and nation-building, glossed over the ethnic differences which had their roots in the processes of colonial rule, colonial emancipation and national mobilisation. The colonial period had brought about a high degree of politico-territorial integration through an efficient, centralised way, coercive machinery of the government. However it also helped cultural and ethnic groups organise themselves politically. The nationalist movement also mobilised ethnic groups, both strategically and ideologically. The notion of self-determination, the prime mover of independence movements in the colonies, derived from the concept of freedom as much as it did from the conception of nation as a definable unit of a people with a common political "will" of forming a sovereign state of their own. The urge and requirements of independence struggles demanded an answer to the question "independence for whom". Colonialism, at one stage, provided a solution to the identity problem. It made available a ready basis for shared identity of various peoples, the identity of exploited and subjugated people in search of all round self-expression. But after independence various sectional groups sought due recognition. Consequently, the post-colonial world order, engineered on the concept of supremacy of the state, anchored on a superimposed nationalism, legitimised by secular or religious ideologies and enforced by an extremely powerful bureaucracy is under great strain.

Thus modernisation, both in developed and developing societies, is inter alia a source of aggravation of aggravating stratificational inequalities, alienation of the individual and groups. The development of media, transportation, social enrolment and urbanisation have not necessarily favoured a homogenisation of society. In fact these very elements that were thought to objectively unify styles of living, have provided ethnic groups with the means of subjectively recognising of themselves as conscious entities. Walker Connor points out that the available evidence about the pattern of ethnic dissonance in the world, at various levels of modernisation, indicates that material increase in social communication and mobilisation intensifies cultural awareness and exacerbates inter-ethnic conflict.

Modernisation theory also provides a clue to ethnic assertion in the present day world in terms of "post-material values" competing with the material interests in the post-Industrial societies. In this context some observers link the revival of ethnicity in the modern era with the advance of science and the decline of religion. With the expansion of the realm of the secular "Scientific State" and the erosion of the religious coloration of the community people are confronted with the dilemma of rationality versus community (religiosity), with the consequent necessity of choosing one over the other or somehow managing a satisfactory integration. Ethnic historicism, in this, has arisen as an attempt to solve this dilemma. The goal of ethnic historicism, it is suggested, is to revive the

ethnic community through a rediscovery and renewal of ethnic communal identity and a reconstruction of mores and attitudes that had existed at some time in the past. Particular reference is made to the role of secular intellectuals undergoing an “identity crisis” who serve as the vanguard of an ethnic historicist revival.

However convincing this point of ethnicity providing a name and an identity in the lonely crowd in the modern world of rapid social change may be, the fact remains that no social process takes place in isolation of politico-economic factors. Therefore modernisation does not explain the phenomenon in its totality. For that we have also to look into economic and political explanations.

18.3.2 Political Economy

Political Economy has both liberal and Marxist interpretations. However within both these schools there are differences with regard to emphasis or preference for one or the other aspect of economic activity. One aspect of this is the factor of regional inequalities. Several scholars have pointed out that modernisation and industrialisation in large, multi-ethnic societies tend to proceed unevenly and often, if not always, tried to benefit some ethnic group or some region of a country more than others. Watson, for instance writes:

The post-1945 world has experienced it was unevenly distributed, not just socially but in particular geographically. More broadly, the development or modernisation process gave rise to spatially differentiated results. Where negative results coincided with a national minority, the potential for a political movement was very likely to be activated, it was noted that the grievances articulated by the minority nationalism were often to do with economic and social disadvantage or exploitation.

In the post-colonial states of the third world, the situation is more complex. The economic development paradigm had shown its ineffectiveness by the early seventies. Stavenhagen points out that here the governing elite had modernised rapidly, but the large masses of the population remained in a state of poverty. In fact, post-colonial capitalist development produced large scale poverty by breaking up pre-capitalist modes of production and forms of social organisation, furthering the market economy and one-crop agriculture, uprooting people from their traditional villages, creating urban squalor and a growing landless proletariat. As the third world economies became increasingly incorporated into, and subordinated to, trans-national capitalism, internal polarisation and inequalities increased between social classes and region. In other words the promisory note of certainty of satisfying everybody's desires becomes instrumental in escalating individual wants and channelling into political processes excessive demands which it cannot expect to satisfy. Arising out of inequalities and nonfulfilment of aspirations is also the feeling of relative deprivation, which some observers suggest as a significant cause for ethno-nationalism.

18.3.3 Relative Deprivation

Ted Robert Gurr in his classical study ‘Why Men Rebel’ refers to relative deprivation as a gap between the expectations and perceived capabilities of a person vis-à-vis his

economic situation, political power and social status in relation to other. He, thus, emphasises the psychological aspect of agitations which conforms to Lenin's view that it is the feeling of being exploited rather than the exploitation itself that makes a person revolutionary. According to this theory it is not just the poorer regions that develop nationalism. The rich regions may also be nationalist if they perceive relative deprivation within the state in economic or political and/or cultural matters. Another aspect, as D.L. Sheth points out, is that in the process of development some minorities have done better than the majority. Those who have done well feel that they could do much better if only their future was not tied with others in the structure of a single state. Those who feel deprived also seek the same solution: to have their own state so that, once free of their deprivator, they can develop better.

Rothchild, speaking in the same vein maintains that politicised ethnic assertiveness today appears to be the keenest among those who have been the least successful and those who have been the most successful in meeting and achieving the norms, standards, and values of the dominants in their several multi-ethnic states. The former resent at their failure while the latter are resentful because their economic success is not reflected in full social and political acceptance. Accordingly "ethno-politics" seeks to address two sets of contradictions: the structural inequality of regions and groups, despite theoretically equal development, and the failure of the state to implement the "normative promises" which is its *raison d'être*. Given the complexity of modern life and the overlapping groups which demand attention from the existing power structure, ethnicity appears to be a rational organisational principle readily available to the political elite as well as those who seek to replace it.

Ethnicity, accordingly represents an effort by the deprived groups (real or perceived) to use a cultural mode for political and economic advancement or share. However, in many instances, inequality in terms of power between two ethnic groups need not per se invoke conflict. The preconditions for such conflict seem to be: (a) a socially mobilised population; (b) the existence of symbolic past connoting its distinctiveness; (c) the selection, standardisation and transmission of such symbol pools to the community by the leadership; and (d) a reference group in relation to whom a sense of relative deprivation (real or imaginary) is aggregated. In any case, in most of the cases, it is the middle class which, finding the existing system detrimental to their interests as well as to their prospects of development, wants to break the "status-quo". Realising that it cannot be done by them alone, they emphasise the problems facing the masses and formulate such religious, ethnic, or regional slogans as may appeal to people of all classes in that region. Some observers, therefore, think that ethnicity is being used primarily as an instrument in "resource competition."

18.3.4 Ethnicity and Resource Competition

Resource competition explanation is based on the belief that ethnic cleavage generally acts as a façade for deeper socio-economic cleavages. To Rothchild, for instance, politicised ethnicity is not the expression of some form of primordial attachments, but rather an instrument in the struggle for power, directly linked to the process of modernisation. Kellas point out that many examples show material and economic interests

at stake in ethnic politics and individuals seeking an advantage, usually by playing up their ethnicity to secure scarce resources. Glazer and Moyanihan also suggest that one of the striking characteristics of the present ethno national situation is indeed the extent to which we find the ethnic groups denied in terms of interest, as an interest group.

Resources can be economic or political. Economic resource competition has dominated the work of anthropologists employing the ecological model. Sociologists, who borrow and extend this view have focused on both economic and political resource competition. Negel, who calls resource competition “cultural materialism”, points out that this theory also stresses the importance of technology and environment in determining the form and substance of culture. It is argued that modernisation increases levels of competition for jobs, housing and other valued resources among ethnic groups and that ethnic conflicts and social movements based on ethnic (rather than some other) boundaries occur when ethnic competition increases. Studies using this approach have found that ethnic party support is much higher in developed, and industrial regions than in underdeveloped ones. Development leads to a rise rather than a decline in ethnic mobilisation because it provides resources to ethnic groups in the periphery, increasing their bargaining position and organisational capacity for action. The literature on the class basis of ethnic movements is also supportive of this theory, for it shows that movement activists tend to be more educated, are more well to do, and have higher occupational status than others among their ethnic groups.

18.3.5 Elite-Competition

Paul Brass says that ethnic identity and modern nationalism arise out of specific types of interaction between the leaderships of centralising states and elite from non-dominant ethnic groups, especially but not exclusively on the peripheries of these states. Elite competition, thus, according to Brass, is the basic dynamic which precipitates ethnic conflict under specific conditions which arise from the broader political and economic environment rather than from the cultural values of ethnic groups in question. The theory is consistent with the assumption that ethnic identity is itself a variable, rather a final or given disposition. The cultural forms, values, and practices of ethnic groups become political resources for elite in competition for political power and economic advantage. They become symbols and referents for the identification of members of the groups, which are called up in order to create a political identity more easily. Ethnic communities are created and transformed by particular elite in modernising and in post-industrial societies undergoing dramatic social change. In pre-industrial societies, particularly, Brass suggests, the primary issue is not allocation of state resources, but control of local communities, which is an issue both within ethnic groups and between ethnic groups and external forces, including other ethnic groups and the state.

Donald Horowitz points out that by appealing to electorates in ethnic terms, by making ethnic demands on government, and by bolstering the influence of ethnically chauvinist elements within each group, parties that begin by merely mirroring ethnic divisions help to deepen and extend them. He, however, also suggests that though the movement for ethnic or cultural revival may begin at an elite level, it cannot end there. The alienated intelligentsia may be anxious to rediscover its lost roots, but the very loss of those roots

disqualifies it from providing anything more than initial moral and perhaps financial leadership for this search. For, the western-educated elite is likely to be ignorant of customary religious practice, deficient in local historical knowledge, unread in local literature, and perhaps not even fully competent in its own language. In the last analysis, it is dependent on an indigenous intelligentsia to carry forward the rediscovery process.

18.3.6 Internal Colonialism

The essence of internal colonialism theory (first advanced by Latin American writers within the broad gamut of dependency) is that the relationship between members of the dominant or core community within a state and members of the minority or peripheral communities are characterised by exploitation.

Writing in 1965, Casavoca maintained that internal colonialism corresponds to a structure of social relations among culturally heterogeneous, distinct groups. A decade later, taking the case of Ireland as his empirical universe, Michael Hechter maintained that ethnic groups would be subjected to internal colonialism in their subjugation of the core region. The main argument behind this contention is that the capital world economy and imperialist state expansion have led to a differential distribution of state resources and valued employment opportunities among ethnic groups. For Wallerstein, for instance, the essence of the modern state is not its relative authority but its role as a distributor of privileges and differentiation among ethnic groups. Similarly Hechter suggests that the modern capitalist state is an upholder of a “cultural division of labour” that distributes valued jobs and economic development unevenly in such a way that the core region of the country controls the best jobs while the peripheral regions are dependent upon the core and the ethnic groups that inhabit core regions are confined to the least skilled and prestigious jobs. Thus, as under colonialism, resources and labour residing in geographical peripheries were developed and entracted by a culturally alien, technologically and organisationally superior dominating group, under internal colonialism, regionally peripheral labour and resources are developed for the enrichment of centre groups and interest. As a result ethnically distinct and economically disadvantaged peripheral population mobilises itself in reaction to exploitation. Nagel points out that what we see here is a culturally distinct group residing in a historically disadvantaged periphery, its resources dwindling, labouring at the command of the centre. Given the convergence of ethnicity and economic status in the stratification system, the salience of ethnic distinction and awareness increases. The internal colonial model, thus, also challenges the functionalist prediction of an inevitable decline in the salience of ethnicity with the increase of cultural homogenisation of the population in step with industrialisation and modernisation. Ethnicity becomes revitalised as a means by which the “periphery” may break out of the bondage from the internal colonialism.

18.3.7 Cultural Deprivation

According to this view one of the significant inducements to ethnicity comes from the feeling of insecurity among ethnic minorities of their fear from getting lost in the sea of majority. This may be either because of the discrimination and oppression by the majority, the state identifying itself with the majority, or the homogenisation process arising out of modernisation leading to creation of synthetic state culture.

True, it is not easy to trace prejudices and discrimination empirically. In fact, it is difficult even to define them. Nevertheless observers do accept that in the contemporary world, the examples of ethnic groups discriminated against or oppressed in varying degrees are too many. Leo Driedgere points out four types of discrimination by the majority against minorities: differential treatment; prejudicial treatment, disadvantaging treatment, and denial of desire. The first two types are attitudinal and the last two behavioural discrimination.

The apprehensions of minority ethnic groups about loss of their cultural identity arise from two sources. The first is the dominant majority, generally politically powerful also, questioning the so-called privileges or rights of minority and attempting to impose its own religious or cultural values as that of the whole society. It means making the political ideology of the core group also the basis of nationalism in the state. This belief system naturally results in strong pressures towards assimilation of the non-dominant groups.

The second arises from the ideology of the modern states to equate the state with the nation. This modern centralised nation-state, even in formal democracies, thinks of regions and local units as its subordinates and agents. Any challenge from them is considered as anti-national and subversive of national unity. In the third world countries, the regimes, particularly in their zeal for nation-building, pursue policies which penetrate homogenising pressures. In some cases states refuse to recognise even the limited traditional rights of minorities to religion, language and culture. This not only leads to ethnic rivalry and conflict but also creates convulsions within the ethnic groups whereby the traditional elite finds its authority increasingly challenged. Unfortunately in the inter-and intra-ethnic rivalry or conflicts the state, rather than acting as an impartial arbiter, assumes the role of sword arm of the predominant ethnic group. It now appears that a considerable number of national minorities are no more ready to “go meekly to their doom”. From the 1960s onwards, as Michael Watson points out, such refusal has been strongly expressed in party and electoral assertions and at times violent assertion of political and cultural demands, summed up in the need for self-determination (whether requiring outright independence or a “home rule” type of autonomy).

The popularity of democracy provides additional impetus to such demands. For the democratic expectation of self-government is as much opposed to internal colonialism as it is to colonialism in the empires. Thus as democracy grows in political attractiveness so also many ethnic groups mobilise themselves politically against the state of which they are part, if they feel they are discriminated or dominated. It is thus suggested that there has been a cultural resurgence among ethnic or linguistic groups who bear a loss of identity due to increased social pressures from dominant modern society. Of late this view has been accepted by many observers, though not as an exclusive cause. Even Marxists have started taking note of it.

18.3.8 External Factors

According to some observers the spurt of ethnic conflict all over the world in recent years owes its sustenance to external involvement and support. It is pointed out that the

use of a large number of small and medium weapons by the ethnic groups, the recurring huge financial requirements for sustenance, and mass-media exposure to their point of view cannot be explained except in terms of the involvement of external powers.

It is also suggested that because of failure of the often used instrument of foreign policy the states have resorted to warfare through other means, i.e. support to ethnic groups against the state or the state against the subnational groups. In a number of cases, since the ethnic groups may straddle border, foreign intervention is built into the problem from the start. Ethnic movements may also get support in moral and material forms from expatriates belonging to the same ethnic group living in various parts of the world. Apart from expatriates, support may also be provided by other ethnic groups for ideological reasons, such as support to liberation movements. Whatever may be the reasons for such a support, it is quite clear that external factor can only provide sustenance and/or a moral boost to ethnicity. It cannot be in itself the main cause for its origin and the existence. This arises from within the society and polity and has to be looked into with reference to specific realities.

18.4 ETHNIC MOVEMENTS

Various explanations discussed above lay emphasis on one or the other reason for ethnicity becoming a focus for political mobilisation. Most observers accept the fact that no single theory or model can explain the phenomenon in all its aspects and in all types of situations. Ethnic mobilisation may have multiple causes. Economic marginality is certainly one of the root causes, and hence one of the theoretical explanations, of regional and national conflicts but it is not by itself a sufficient basis for a general theory of ethnicity or regionalism. Economic factors are, of course, fundamental to theoretical explanations, but they are many sided and must be considered in their concrete reality. Historical and political factors are most important, but these must also be considered as concrete elements of specific historical development and of a specific political system. Cultural factors can also develop in complex ways, both as a result of political conflict and of ideological confrontation (linguistic conflicts, for example). But even these must be considered in terms of their specific reality. Ethnic nationalism is also a reflection of broader and deeper consensus in modern society, such as disquiet at standardisation, an intensifying identity crisis, and growing general dissatisfaction with government and the major parties. Hence, ideologically, ethno-nationalism offers a combination of older themes related to the community, common inheritance and culture along with newer ones relating to economic development and democratic control. Also, it is important to note that motivating forces alone do not give rise to ethnic movements. The degree to which ethnic groups have a well developed substructure of various kinds of organisations and associations of their own which encapsulates them and keeps them externally isolated from their potential opponents is also a necessary determinant.

During the post-Second World War period, in general, in multi-ethnic societies, one discerns two simultaneous and ongoing processes of nation-building: (a) the formation of an inter-ethnic composite of a homogeneous national personality with a secular outlook through the state apparatus, and (b) the transformation of an ethnic group in a

multi-ethnic society to an ethnic community of nations. While the former can be described as the building of a state-centred nation, the latter can be described as an ethnic nation. While the former comes somewhat closer to the usually accepted western interpretation of the term nation state, the latter approximates the usage of the term sub-nation and the Marxian usage of the term “nation” and “nationality” or ethno-social sub-division. If development has not meant the inevitable demise of ethnic attachment, perhaps the reason is that ethnicity is qualitatively different from what it was considered to be. It appears to be more adaptive and resilient and less tradition-bound than many social scientists have suggested. That is why ethnic conflict and movements today appear to be a normal feature of developing as well as advanced industrial societies with varied consequences for social and political processes.

Western Europe has recently faced renewed militancy by territorial and national minorities in states that considered such problems as having been solved long ago. Such examples are the Bretons and Corricans in France, the Scottish and Welsh in Great Britain, the simmering linguistic conflict between the Flemish and the Wallcons in Belgium, the conflict in Ulster between the Catholics and the Protestants, the Basque country in Spain. The Quebec situation in Canada is delicate. In the U.S.A. which used to boast of being the melting pot of nations, ethnicity has become a major focus for political action. The large scale inflow of Hispanics, who do not take to the English language, has started causing worry. Even the pervasive and compelling ideology of socialism finds itself continually confronted by sub-nationalist demands for home rule. In addition to what has happened in the U.S.S.R. and East Europe, in China, despite numerous legal and institutional safeguards, many minority nationalities grudge the cultural and political domination of the Han majority. In Tibet, for quite some time, the nationalist sentiment has been openly expressed.

In the Arab world and Western Asia, religious and ethnic minorities (such as the Druese, the Cophs, the Buluchs, and the Berbers) seek accommodation with the dominant culture; others strive for self determination (such as Kurds, Saharouis, and Palestinians); still others seek historical redress for ancient grievances. In Africa, recent history witnessed, among other ethnic problems, a bloody civil war in Nigeria: massacres and persecution of one ethnic group by another in Rwanda and Burundi; mass expulsion of Asians from Uganda and Ghanians from Nigeria; ethnic-political struggles in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zaire, Chad and Angola. There have been disastrous conflicts in the Horn of Africa. The Latin American countries have failed to solve the internal problems – cultural and psychological – which by encouraging chauvinistic nationalism have forestalled effective nation-building. Recent events in South Asia suggest that this region with unique ethnic, linguistic, religious diversity is rather too much prone to dangerous conflicts.

Thus in every system and regime, ethno-cultural resurgence has put to question the very basis of nation-state and the concept of nationality. The last three decades of the twentieth century have particularly been a period during which minority nationalist movements have multiplied and flourished. It is estimated that more than 75 per cent of on going major conflicts of today are due to ethnic considerations. As already mentioned, one of the most important functions of cultural movements is to support ethnic boundary maintenance or, more properly, boundary reconstruction. Typically, they attempt to

repair breaches in boundaries and prevent the loss of group members, especially elite members. They infuse group identity with a new or revived cultural content that may command greater allegiance or demarcate the lines between groups more clearly, reducing the element of individual choice in identity. That cultural movements are employed to effect, forestall, or reverse boundary changes is, of course, evidence that cultural practices and institutions are not givens of ethnic identity but may actually follow from it.

18.5 STRATEGIES OF ETHNIC MOVEMENTS

We have seen above that Ethnic movements apart from concern for identity, are political, economic and cultural manifestations of ethnic solidarity. In many cases ethnic group-based activities seem to be rational responses on the part of individuals and groups to contemporary situations encouraged in modern societies. The demands and goals of ethnic movements differ from situation to situation. These range from simple demands for protection of language or culture to complete autonomy or separation. Within these the nature and language of education, the designation of holidays, the development of cultural programmes and such other policy measures are issues of concern. As mentioned earlier, particularly in modern systems, where public authority delves into many aspects of life, culturally distinct groups may well aspire to control that authority in culturally sensitive areas. These may be demands for establishment of federal systems, or more powers to states in existing federal systems like being made by some groups in India, or recognition of special status for state or province as is the case in Quebec, Canada. In general ethnic demands are of four types:

- a) for affirmative discrimination
- b) for greater autonomy and unquestioned power
- c) autonomy demand related to systematic change, and
- d) secession

Similarly various ethnic movements use different techniques to attain their goals. Christopher Hewitt, having conducted a survey of a number of ethnic movements observes that the strategies generally used are civil war, communal (ethnic) rioting and terrorism. Civil War is marked by widespread conflict between highly organised and heavily armed military units. There is either a struggle for control of the state, as in Zanzibar, or the state fragments and its authority passes to ethnic factions who battle for territory, as in Cyprus and Lebanon. This type of conflict, threatening a revolutionary transformation of the pre-existing state, is clearly the most serious kind of ethnic conflict, leading to very high death rates as well as widespread social disruption and property damage.

Communal rioting is of two types. The first involves clashes between civilian crowds rather than between organised military units. The violence is spontaneous and the weapons used are often home-made and primitive. Communal rioting, while it may involve incursions into the other group's areas, does not typically involve attempts to gain or control territory such as occur in civil war situations. Nor is there any serious likelihood that the government will be overthrown by this kind of violence. In this kind of communal rioting there is a widespread willingness to attack members of the other community

simply because of their ethnic identity. Communal riots of this type occur in communally sensitive societies though their severity varied considerably.

Another type of communal riot does not involve confrontations between rival crowds, but rather clashes between soldiers or police and civilians of one ethnic community together with some looting and property damage. Such confrontations have been significant in the United States, Israel, and Northern Ireland.

Terrorism is defined as violence carried out by but highly organised groups. It includes such acts as assassinations, bombings, and small-scale gunbattles. Although such acts are often committed in association with other kinds of violence, terrorist campaigns of any significance are not common. The activities of the Irish Republican Army and the Protestant Loyalist groups have been responsible for the great majority of deaths in Northern Ireland. Intermittent racial terrorism in the United States has had little social impact and claimed only a handful of lives. In Canada the separatist “Front de Liberation du Quebec” was responsible for a handful of kidnappings and bombings. In India terrorist activities by ethnic movements had been used in North Eastern part of the country and Jammu and Kashmir. A significant example of use of terrorism is by LTTE in Sri Lanka.

18.6 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have seen that most countries in the world are populated by several distinct ethnic groups and a number of them have experienced or are experiencing ethnic movements of one or the other type. The problems involved in managing group conflicts in multi-ethnic societies are multifarious and exceedingly complex. The growth of the ethnic self assertion is in many ways a consequence of these managerial problems and related developments. In many societies ethnicity has become the main base for interest demands also. Among the possible causes generating ethnic movements are fear of loss of identity, economic grievances, political grievances, political mobilisation by elite etc. The most general complaint is that one community is denied its fair share of economic and political power. The demands and goals of the ethnic movements range from redressal of grievances by the State to those of complete autonomy or separation. Similarly ethnic movements can take various shapes ranging from peaceful constitutional protests to civil war, with ethnic or communal rioting and terrorism in between.

Whether in the shape of agitations for autonomy, movements for better politico-economic structure, or struggle for separation, the phenomena of ethnicity is an intrinsic component of the socio political realities of most of the multi-ethnic states in the world today. It is becoming increasingly evident that in the post Second World War period both neo-liberal and socialist claims have not been able to remove the ethno-national question from the political agenda. Therefore the issue of how to cope with the complexities of multi-ethnic states and ethnicity remains significant.

18.7 EXERCISES

- 1) What do you understand by Ethnonationalism?

- 2) Evaluate the processes Modernisation and Resource allocation as causes for the emergence of Ethnic Movements.
- 3) Describe and assess the economic factors including internal colonialism as responsible for ethnic movements.
- 4) Analyse the nature of ethnic movements and various strategies used by them.
- 5) Write an essay on Ethnic Movements in the age of modernisation.

