

Centre–State Relations

Attacks on State Governments by the Centre

Indicate the Crisis in Ruling System

After independence and after the merger of the princely states, the Indian system formed with a conglomeration of states, adopted a federal system. In the Constitution, at least nominally, certain rights, powers and laws have been provided to the States on legislative, administrative and on how the financial relations between the Centre and the States should be. Struggles and protests for strengthening and for better amendments of laws resulted in some additional rights granted to the states over time. The efforts of the democratic forces and communists in this regard are unforgettable. But from the very beginning, the governments in power at the Centre have continued to subvert them and discriminate against the states. They are hurting the spirit and policy of federalism. Many commissions have been appointed at a time when there are many issues between the states and the Centre. However, First Administrative Reforms Commission (1966), Sarkaria Commission (1983), Venkatachaliah Commission (2000) and Poonchi Commission (2007) are some of significance. But the reports of these commissions have been trampled upon by whichever government is in power. At present the RSS-controlled BJP government is in power at the Centre. Ever since the Modi government came to power in 2014, it has been very aggressive and autocratic, resorting to multifaceted attacks on state governments and their rights, without consideration of the states.

When the Modi government came to power in the first phase, it dissolved the Planning Commission and set up the NITI Aayog. As per the recommendation of the Planning Commission, the Central Government used to spend at least a fraction of the funds on agriculture, industries, public sector, basic infrastructure development and for development of backward states. With the abolition of the Planning Commission, the funds that were due to the respective sectors and states have been affected. The NITI Aayog has also suggested reducing the expenditure of funds given to states for central government welfare schemes. Accordingly, the central government keeps reducing the funds. (e.g., Employment Guarantee Scheme, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, etc.)

In 2017, the Centre introduced the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in the name of 'One Nation–One Tax'. Earlier, the Centre used to give some share of the revenue earned through taxes collected by the Centre to the states. But after GST came in, the share of states was gradually reduced and today the situation is the share is completely halted. There is no increase in the basic excise tax to be shared with the states on petroleum products that are not covered by GST. The Centre is drastically increasing the special excise tax, additional excise tax, surcharges and cess that need not be shared with the states. When there is a

public outcry over the hike in the prices of petroleum products, the Centre puts the blame on the states and corners the states for not reducing VAT. One of the reasons the states are reeling into deep debts is the Centre's non-disbursement of the due funds. However, if states are to be permitted to borrow new debts, Centre will put pressure on the state governments to increase property taxes and other taxes.

The Centre has brought in three black farm laws, regardless of the states' consideration, to completely subvert the agriculture sector, which is part of state list, to the imperialists and the corporate forces. If these laws are implemented, the agriculture sector and the farmers will have to go bankrupt. Recognizing this danger, the peasants and peasants' organisations waged a relentless struggle and agitation amidst many restrictions. The Centre was forced to withdraw these laws. But the Centre plays many dramas to implement the minimum support price law that is within the purview of the Centre. Similarly, with the act, which was brought in the name of amending the Electricity Act, the entire decision making on the purchase, sale, price fixation of electricity and the electricity related organisations which are within the purview of the states shall be taken over by the Centre. By fixing meters for agricultural motors and high electricity prices, an unbearable burden is forced on farmers and on consumers respectively.

The Centre is looking to take control of the river waters by bringing in a law called the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act-1956 amendment to resolve disputes between states. Moreover, in the name of the Dam Safety Bill, rivers and reservoirs; and in the name of the Ports Bill small ports within the scope of the states are taken into control by the Centre. The Centre has tightened its full grip on the forests by removing the powers within the purview of the states. The Manipur violence is part of an amendment to the forest conservation laws to provide an opportunity to drive out tribals and loot forest wealth. The consequence of which is the Manipur violence. With the formation of the co-operative society, it will take over the small co-operative banks and institutions in the states. Thus, in many forms, the Centre takes control of the financial resources, institutions, industries and natural resources within the purview of the States. It attacks the states in every possible way to hand them over to imperialists and big corporates at a cheaper price.

Article 370 and Article 35A were undemocratically abrogated and Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into three Union Territories, which granted autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir irrespective of the people of Kashmir, the state government elected by the people or the state's political parties and leaders. The Centre has promulgated Delhi ordinance to take away the powers of the Delhi state government elected by the people and gave all powers to the Lieutenant Governor. It also challenged the Supreme Court's decision to bring an ordinance in defiance of the Supreme Court's verdict that the elected state government would have the powers. It also interferes with the state administration affairs by using Governors in non-BJP states to dominate them. In order to further suppress the voices of questioning and to detain them in jails, it made changes in the laws of UAPA, NSA, irrespective of the states' consideration. Furthermore, the National Education Policy has been brought in and imposed irrespective of the consent of states. The attempt to impose

Hindi language on the states as an official language has backfired for the time being as some states have opposed it.

Thus, the Centre has been acting in an autocratic manner by increasing its dictatorship over the economic, administrative, education, medical, language and cultural sectors of the states. This means that all the ruling class systems are in deep crisis. In order to come out of this crisis, the ruling class parties are imposing many burdens on the people and sacrificing the people.

The fascist BJP government at the Centre is taking the pro-imperialist policies of the previous rulers on its shoulders and serving them. It is formulating policies more aggressively to give away all sectors to imperialist companies and corporates, undermining peoples' issues. While providing opportunities to loot public sector industries, institutions, banks, natural and mineral resources, and adopting anti-people policies, the state governments are not even sincere in opposing them, instead they are following the same policies. Despite cutting funds for welfare schemes and announcing bailouts and subsidies to corporates worth lakhs of crores of rupees, state govts have kept their mouth shut. However, the state's ruling classes have vehemently opposed the changes in the CBI Act brought in by the Centre that the CBI can carry out raids without the consent of the states. This shows for whose interests the central and state ruling governments are working.

The BJP government came to power with serious promises of creating two crore jobs a year, unearthing black money stashed abroad and doubling farmers' incomes in 10 years. While not even one of these has been done in these 9 years, the severity of peoples' issues have increased further. Their game didn't work in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka during the elections, where they wanted to win by promoting communal conflicts and vicious propaganda instead of focusing on people's issues. With the defeat in the states, it has plunged into a deep crisis and into a sense of insecurity. Similarly, in some states, it came to power by engaging in splits, division and conspiracy. In order to win the upcoming general elections and assembly elections in five states, it will resort to attacks and splits on non-BJP states. Or somehow during the elections, it is trying to create communal riots and conflicts to win. The Modi-Shah duo has been cracking down on non-BJP state governments and parties that are not part of the NDA alliance with allegations of corruption at every meeting they attend as part of election preparations.

Rahul Gandhi's disqualification is part of the culmination of this crisis and insecurity. It is a well-known fact that a prominent NCP leader and a few other MLAs, who are facing ED cases in Maharashtra recently and who were accused of corruption, have joined the BJP alliance and have become ministers. Prior to this, it brought splits in Shiv Sena and came to power in Maharashtra. BJP leaders have been openly warning that the situation in Bihar will be similar to Maharashtra. In West Bengal as BJP did not win the state assembly elections, they are creating riots and attacks, causing panic among the people, as well as creating tensions in the local body elections. In the states, leaders of non-BJP parties are being

threatened with raids by agencies like CBI, ED and IT. The Centre continues to carry out such attacks until they joined the BJP or surrendered.

As far as the southern states are concerned, the BJP government in Karnataka, which has taken away the rights of the people and undermined the welfare of the people, did not even pay heed to the fact that the contractors' association complained to PM Modi that there was an increase in corruption and commissions were being collected for everything in the government system. It wanted to grab power by inciting tensions like the cow protection act and the Hijab issue. The debacle in the Karnataka elections was the result of the BJP's atrocious rule. But here the people of Karnataka have no other alternative and so gave power to the Congress and not out of faith in the Congress. This is because the Congress also belongs to the BJP category.

The YCP party campaigned that if YCP party comes to power in Andhra Pradesh, it will fight with the centre and win the special status, bifurcation promises and Polavaram. But ever since it came to power, the AP government led by Jagan Mohan Reddy has surrendered completely to the Centre. Every decision and Act taken by the Centre is implemented firmly. Opposition parties like TDP and Jana Sena Party are also aligned with the Centre. While the Telangana CM KCR government and the BRS leadership also appear to be vehemently opposed to the Centre on certain issues, it cracked down on the BJP, saying it will mobilise opposition parties against the BJP in the country but after a while became silent.

From the very beginning, the BJP has been continuously attacking the CPM-led Kerala government with poisonous and vicious propaganda. Kerala also disagrees with the anti-people policies of the central government in some aspects. The CPM, however, has been protesting at the forefront of the ranks and file that the BJP fascist government is handing over all the natural resources in the country to Ambani and Adani. But the fishermen protesting against the handing over of the Vizhinjam port in Kerala to Adani, turned violent. It is a matter of concern that the BJP and the CPM are holding protest demonstrations together against these agitators. Surprisingly, the Kerala government has requested the Prime Minister to grant funds and clearances for the Silver Line, a semi-high-speed railway line that destroys most of nature and natural resources. The Tamil Nadu government has also vehemently opposed the Centre's stand on farm laws, Hindi language domination, etc.

The opposition parties in the country have started making efforts to defeat the BJP in the upcoming general elections by forming a single alliance no matter how many differences they have. The formation of 'INDIA' is a part of it. It has become a trend for opposition parties to form fronts during elections. They have no other idea but to win elections. The ruling classes are willing to form a front for their personal and political gains, but are unable to stand firm in opposing anti-people policies. So, the alliance's efforts should not be limited to defeating the BJP in elections alone.

The central and state ruling classes, are ultimately the ones that will subserve the imperialist and bourgeoisie and protect their interests. Therefore, the people should fight against the pro-imperialist and anti-people policies and actions of the BJP-fascist

government and attacks on the states. The ruling-class governments of the states and the opposition political classes, which do not care about the development and interests of the state and the people of the country, other than their own political and administrative interests, should be exposed. To divert people's attention from the real issues, people should be sensitised not to fall prey to the fanatical ideology that is inciting hysteria and hatred. Intellectuals, social activists, democratic forces and revolutionary forces must work in that direction.