

STATE, POLITICAL ECONOMY AND GOVERNANCE

ABHIJEET MISHRA¹

¹Research Scholar, Department of Social Work, University of Delhi, Delhi, INDIA

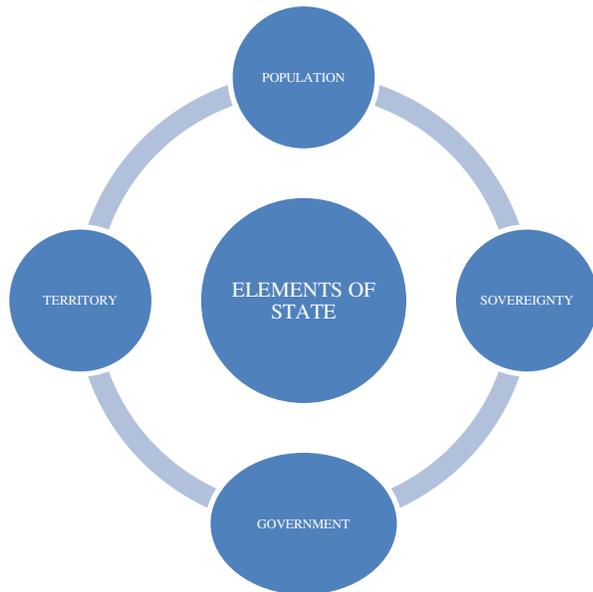
ABSTRACT

State can be defined as any formal geographic territory, which is politically organized and the decision-making is by a single independent government. The individuals that comprise the state are the citizens or the voters. As a result of the expansion of the state in managing economic activities, working as an arbiter and a conflict resolver, the new notion of state as a Social Institution arise. Furthermore, the state started to develop as the main authoritative centre for the power sharing and emerging political forms and lately it started to expand its territory to the peripheral zones, largely working for the socio-economic welfare of the downtrodden or the general public and solving the intrastate and interstate conflicts. As a result of this, the state impinged over the lives of the people, as there day to day activities, decision making and welfare became a part of the welfare state and their lives were governed by judiciary, laws and machinery of the government.

KEY WORDS: State, Economy, Governance, Territory, Population, Sovereignty,

Understanding the State

To understand the State, one must understand its elements that majorly comprise it.



The very first element of the state is Population, which denotes the human component. A state must have substantial number of people, though largely it can be said that no number of persons had been fixed. But as per Rousseau, an ideal size would be 10,000 inhabitants. In the present time it's been observed that state can be of variable size such as Switzerland is comparatively very small to China. The people living in the state are its citizen and enjoy all the rights that are vested upon them by the state.

Government is an inseparable element of the state by the virtue of which state functions, implements and formulates its policies. Government can be of any type- monarchy, parliamentary, dictatorship. It is largely composed of 3 wings- The Executive, Judiciary and the Legislative.

Sovereignty is an element which is highly inscribed with the state and without which no state can thrive. Jurisprudence defines the sovereignty as lack of any external interference to the state functioning. Internal Sovereignty tends to denote the legal authority of the state over the institutions and groups that come under its territory. While, people are bound with the state laws and not abiding to them may lead to punishment. On the other hand, External Sovereignty means that state is free from

any external influences and follows all the international laws and rules.

Territory is also another important element of the state and it can be postulated that state is a territorial entity. A state must have defined geographical boundaries and area that delineates it from other states. State, nevertheless of the size, must have specific limits and territory.

As it is always said that man is a social animal, he develops social relations. His needs and desires compel him to develop various relations and exist as an inborn entity. The man expands into family and get involved with various other social and economic institutions. His and his family's security is utmost important to him and is largely provided by the state, a sense of social security. In cases, state also tends to provide economic security by various social and welfare schemes. The state serves the social security, economic security, legal rights, fundamental rights and rights against exploitation. State plays a major role in formulating various financial policies, releasing of funds, allocation of capital etc. It also facilitates and regulates the international economic relations and trade. In cases of security breach and wars, state plays a major role in securing its population against the enemies, by the help of civil force and army.

With all these evidences one cannot ignore the existence of state in our day to day life.

2. EVERYDAY LIFE AND STATE

The politics and state are so intertwined in our social lives that we often don't realize it. Considering the following situation that an individual faces in their daily lives-

- a. Getting up early in the morning and reading a newspaper or watching a news channel.
- b. Driving down the roads and going to the workplace.
- c. Having a Coffee at Costa Coffee.
- d. Browsing a social networking site or YouTube.
- e. Taking up a public transport to reach Hauz Khas from Timarpur.

In the above situations we often ignore the political perspective. For Instance, the freedom of media is highly regulated by the ruling government. For instance, if

we look at the 2014 Press Freedom Index of Reporters without Borders, we can see that the countries like Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Luxembourg are ranked atop the list, while North Korea, China, Iran, Somalia and Sudan are ranked very low. The high rank in the Index is largely a subset of the less interference of the state in regulate the freedom of the media. While it could be observed that Finland, Netherlands, Norway and other such countries have parliamentary government. While, on the other hand, if we consider the example of the Republic of China "Powerful domestic institutions like the Central Propaganda Department and the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television still constrain efforts by the media to become more autonomous and politically diverse" (Hearn-Branaman, 2014). Also, in the case of North Korea which ranks 179/180 in the Press Freedom Index 2014, the "media are under some of the strictest government control in the world" (Wikipedia). Hence, how can one ignore the role of state in our everyday life when reading a newspaper in any economy is heavily regulated by it?

There had been many countries that'd blocked social networking sites such as Facebook, largely due to fear of it being used to organize a political rally or plan anything that can lead to fall of the country's leaders. Countries like Pakistan, Cuba, Bangladesh, North Korea, Republic of China, Iran, Vietnam, Syria, Mauritius and Egypt have blocked the use of Facebook. In China, in the 17 Square Mile free trade zone of Shanghai, this ban was lifted by 2013 September, as it could be seen as an effort to ease their investors. Countries with communist government, follow a very aggressive media control policy to regulate the content that is been shared to people and by the people.

A Public Transport or a road is largely an intervention of the State's Welfare Scheme and is maintained by the municipal corporation or the Highway Authorities. Hence if the political system is unstable, the civic amenities may get affected adversely and hence using the public transport makes us a consumer of the political institution.

Lastly, having a coffee, which is imported from the UK which is a subset of foreign trade, at times get highly political. There are numerous countries such as North Korea, Iceland, Yemen and Bermuda that had

banned the McDonalds, because this global brand may affect their economy adversely. Also, it is observed that 90% coffee is been produced in Developing Countries and is consumed in the industrialized societies and this trade is affected by the political units within the country.

3. FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY

An Internet based survey was conducted, which is been attached in the Appendix and the sample size is 94 persons. The methodology was to have an opinion of the people about the State.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PEOPLE:

A. Mean Age: 24.5

B. Nationality:

Indian	33
British	28
American	4
Scottish	1
French	3
Pakistan	2
Polish	1
Kurdish	1
Chinese	1
Swedish	1
Russian	2
Australian	3
Italian	2
Nepal	1
Malawian	1
Catalan	1
Israeli	1
Greek Cypriot/Greek	2

Gender of the respondents:

Male	50	52
Female	44	48

Findings:

1. Proud Over the Nationality:

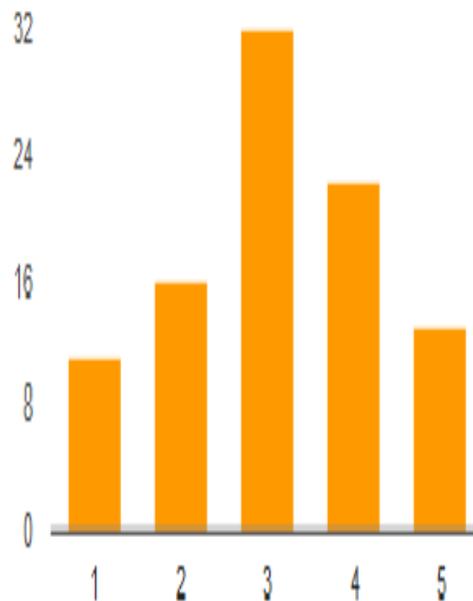
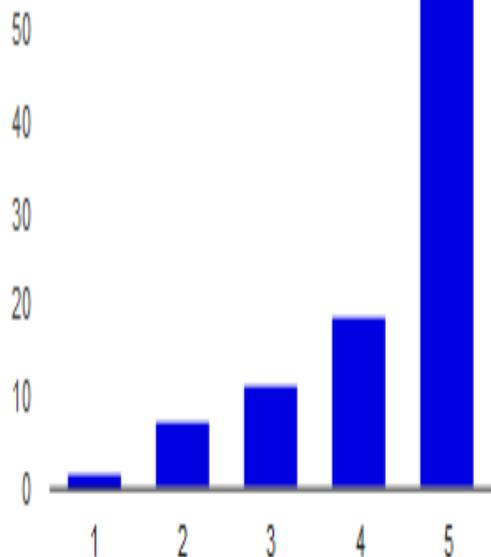
Indicatory	Responses	Percentages
Very Proud	21	22.5
Proud	50	54
Not Much Proud	14	15.05
Disappointed	8	8.6

It is indeed true that the proud over ones nationality directly links to the satisfaction level with the government and the government's efficiency and efficacy. This is reflective of the fact that how much benevolent is the state in wielding its power over the citizens. It is also the reflective of the reputation of that country's nationality globally. It was observed that about 50 respondents out of the total 94 people surveyed, agreed to be proud over their nationality, while 21 were "very proud". If the data is to be dissected properly, one could permeate the fact that Indian Citizens were largely very proud over their state. 14 People were not very much proud, and 8 were clearly disappointed. Out of the disappointed population, only one was Indian, while there were 4 British, One French, Greek and Australian. Well it could be discerned that the data may be a reflective of the opinion of the very small population and can be biased at a certain level. To the response of being proud or disappointed over their Nationality, in a global context, was further asked to be elaborated by one word, that'd describe the reason of choosing the answer. It yielded very different set of opinions.

Such as the 25 year old, QA Specialist Indian Male used the word "Disappointed" to describe his option. Moreover, an eighteen year old British Student called his State to be "Self-righteousness". Indians used words such as "Democracy", "Nostalgia", "History", "One", "Diversity", "Togetherness", and "Brains" etc. It was discerned that the Indians were proud over the "Democracy", as this answer was very repetitive. The Indian people who "Not much proud" used the words such as "Stereotypes", "The People", "Cheap" and "Lack of awareness about greatness of own culture (way of living)". A 45 Year Old Pakistani Women used the word "Borders are manmade" to show her disappointment over her nationality.

2.CONCERN OVER THE DISCRIMINATORY LAWS

Scale	Response	Percentage
Least Concerned: 1	2	2.2%
2	6	6.5%
3	11	12%
4	18	19.6%
Highly Concerned: 5	55	59.8%



The response of the citizen to the discriminatory laws of the state shows their concern towards humane governance. A Law passed by the State must be inclusive and encompass the welfare of the every individual, whether majority or minority. Overall, 59.8% people responded that they'd be highly concerned if any discriminatory law is been passed by their government. There were only 8.7% people who showed very less concern over this issue. The people who sowed least concern were of varied nationalities, such as India (2), Australia (1), Israel (1), British (1), etc.

3. MEDIA AS THE VOICE OF THE DEMOCRACY

Scale	Responses	Percentage
Don't Agree: 1	11	12%
2	16	17.4%
3	31	33.7%
4	21	22.8%
Totally Agree: 5	13	14.1%

Media and the press have the major influence over the everyday life of the people, and media plays a major role in conveying information about day to day state affairs. It is already been discussed that media is largely controlled by the state and is also a major player in molding people's mentality about the state.

On an average, 36.9% agree to the statement that "Media is the voice of Democracy in my Nation". While about 34 % people chose the middle option. Moreover, 30% people did not agree to this statement. Well largely it could be discerned that the British, Australian, Indian and Israeli were the major constituent of the 30% people who did not agree to the statement. Well, it can be said that the media and related freedom is quite a debatable topic, while the people of the same nationality show varied set of information. Well largely, the overall picture depicts that media is quite able to reach out to people, as indicated by the survey data, and has been influencing people's mind, thought, ideologies and actions. The question that followed adjourned over the freedom of speech to the media and the clear cut answers were 11% not agreeing, 63% agreeing and 26% indication that the media's freedom of speech is regulated or limited.

MISHRA : STATE, POLITICAL ECONOMY AND GOVERNANCE

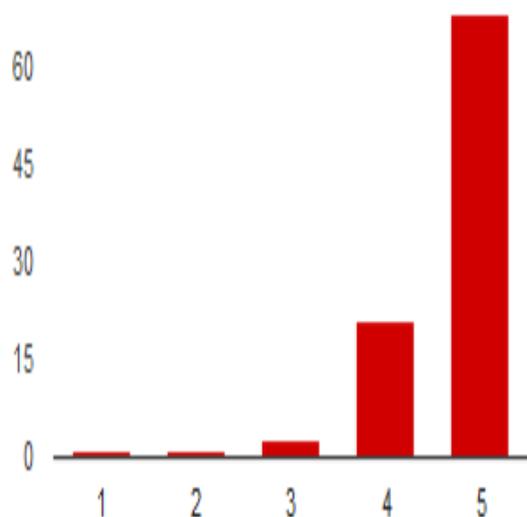
Majority of the Indians, Nepalese, Israelis, Australians and Britishers marked either No or Limited/Regulated. Americans, Italians and a few more Britishers and Indians called it to be very free.

Options	Response	Percentage
Yes	58	63%
No	10	10.9%
Limited/Regulated	24	26.1%

State and Freedom of Speech:

Freedom of speech is a right that is bestowed to the citizens by the state under its sovereign element. It can be hence discerned that this is a way by which the state is incorporated in our lives and influence our sphere. Taking away the freedom of speech would be a huge impeachment to the fundamental rights of an individual and hence having concern to this is viable.

Scale	Response	Percentage
Least Concerned: 1	1	1.1%
2	1	1.1%
3	2	2.2%
4	20	21.7%
Highly Concerned: 5	68	73.9%



It was observed that more than 96% of the respondents would be concerned if their freedom of speech is been taken away. Moreover, the 2% respondents who commented that they'd be least concerned were of Indian and Tibetan Nationality. This is a question worth thinking on that why wouldn't they be concerned? Impact of Various Political Institutions on Daily Life: This question was aimed to analyze the people's perception on the impact of various political institutions on their daily life, as this would help us to intervene that to what extent the machinery of the government impact the people's lives.

A. The Police:

It was observed that about 52% people considered Police as an important state institution that affects their day to day life. While 23.7% people were of the middle opinion and about 23.7% people considered it not much important in their day to day life.

Scale	Response	Percentage
Least Important: 1	6	6.6%
2	16	17.6%
3	22	24.2%
4	26	28.6%
Most Important: 5	21	23.1%

B. Military Force:

43% of the people considered Military Force as an important state institution that affects their day to day life while 45.1% considered as not so important in the everyday life. About 11% people were of the mid opinion that its influence not too much or not too less.

Scale	Response	Percentage
Least Important: 1	23	25.3%
2	19	20.9%
3	10	11%
4	15	16.5%
Most Important: 5	24	26.4%

C. The Government:

As it has already been discussed that government is an indispensable organ of the state and it has direct influence on people's lives. Only 2% of the people considered it to be less important, and about 10.8% chose the mid opinion, While about 86.9% people deemed it to be an important influence in everyday life and society.

Scale	Response	Percentage
Least Important: 1	1	1.1%
2	1	1.1%
3	10	11%
4	36	39.6%
Most Important: 5	43	47.3%

D. Education System

Scale	Response	Percentage
Least Important: 1	4	4.4%
2	2	2.2%
3	7	7.7%
4	14	15.4%
Most Important: 5	64	70.3%

As per the data, it is also considered as a very important institution that affects the lives of the people. About 85% called it as an important aspect, while 6% did not.

E. Workplace Union and Trade Union:

Scale	Response	Percentage
Least Important: 1	26	28.6%
2	10	11%
3	25	27.5%
4	17	18.7%
Most Important: 5	13	14.3%

Workplace Union

Workplace Union and the Trade Unions are also the political entities that are formed for the affiliation and the welfare of the people, pertaining to them. But it can be observed that majority of people did not consider it to be affecting their life much. Their influence, as per the data, is only on about 33 to 35 % people.

Scale	Response	Percentage
Least Important: 1	28	31.1%
2	11	12.2%
3	16	17.8%
4	25	27.8%
Very Important: 5	10	11.1%

Trade Union

F. Local Political Unit:

The local political unit here meant the administrative unit in the concerned area. These are very major players in implementing the welfare schemes and providing various securities to the people at the nodal or micro level. As per the data, only to the 30.8% people their existence mattered and had an influence to their lives, but about 39.6% people had not considered them as an important aspect in their lives. 29.7% were of the middle opinion.

Scale	Response	Percentage
Least Important: 1	17	18.7%
2	19	20.9%
3	27	29.7%
4	16	17.6%
Most Important: 5	12	13.2%

G. Parliament:

The parliament is the major player in passing the legislations, and hence impacting the everyday society. As per the survey outcome, about 68.9% people agreed to the fact that parliament is an important state institutions that affect their life. While only 18.9% considered it to be of less importance. 12.2% were considering it to be of not too much important or not very less important, a middle opinion.

Least Important: 1	9	10%
2	8	8.9%
3	11	12.2%
4	29	32.2%
Most Important: 5	33	36.7%

H. Press:

Press, as we can see, Media and Press come under the direct influence of the state and are regulated by it. Hence, the opinion on the people that how much media influences their life serves good importance to us. Evidently, 68.2% people considered it to be an influence in the day to day life in molding opinions or disseminating information. Only a small chunk of people, 13.2%, considered it to be of less importance. But the majority considered it to be an important institution in their lives.

MISHRA : STATE, POLITICAL ECONOMY AND GOVERNANCE

Scale	Response	Percentage
Least Important: 1	2	2.2%
2	10	11%
3	17	18.7%
4	32	35.2%
Most Important: 5	30	33%

State and Inclusion:

Minorities are a major subject of discussion in a state and the anti-discriminatory policies for them maintain a better peace situation in the state. It also shows good and inclusive governance. On the basis of the survey result, it was deciphered that about 35.5 % people considered their country's legal system to be inclusive in terms of anti-discriminatory laws. While 35.6% people considered it to be less inclusive. About 28.9% people considered it to be in the middle of inclusion and exclusion.

Scale	Response	Percentage
Completely Agree: 1	7	7.8%
2	25	27.8%
3	26	28.9%
4	21	23.3%
Completely Disagree: 5	11	12.2%

(Inclusive Legal System)

Now coming to Inclusive governance, 24.4% considered their native government to not inclusive, while 39.6% were of the middle opinion. 35.2% people deemed their government to be inclusive. This data can be analyzed to more extent but is limited by time constraint.

Scale	Response	Percentage
Completely Agree: 1	4	4.4%
2	19	20.9%
3	36	39.6%
4	17	18.7%
Completely Disagree: 5	15	16.5%

(Inclusive Governance)

Satisfaction with the Judiciary:

The judiciary is an important wing of the state and people's satisfaction and dissatisfaction to it means a lot. For instance if the justice is been imparted in a non biased and anti discriminatory basis, the legal system would be considered to be good, otherwise it will be booed by the people. 29.7% people were not much satisfied with their

judicial system while about 35% people were in not too much satisfied not too much dissatisfied. Moreover, About 35.2% people considered it to be satisfactory.

Scale	Response	Percentage
Least Satisfied: 1	6	6.6%
2	21	23.1%
3	32	35.2%
4	23	25.3%
Highly Satisfied: 5	9	9.9%

Views of the Respondents on the Machinery of Government in their Nation:

“Govt of my country has the best machinery to create money of the public, by the citizens, for the govt officials :)” – 27 year old Indian Male Social Worker.

“We need political, judicial and electoral reforms to make sure that the democratisation reaches up to gross root level”- A 35 Year old Indian Male Teacher.

“My government is neglecting the needs of its people and our planet, prioritising instead appealing to corporations for profit and the pursuit of the smallest state possible.” – An 18 year old British Student, Male.

“Laws of India are appropriately constructed while their implementation by government agencies is equally faulty. Government has to take strict measures in this respect!” A 22 year old Indian Female.

“We have a monarchy that needs going, a House of Lords that serves to be ennhalated and a useless way of electing leaders” – An 18 year old British Male Student.

“In reference to Scottish Parliament, their policies are very localised and differences can be seen. Westminster less so.” – A 19 Year Old Male Scottish Student.

“There is a need for lot of improvement and the present union government is working well. We want more reforms i.e GST,labour reforms etc.” – A 19 year old Indian Male Student.

“The dominance of vote bank politics and demagoguery to mobilise supporters based on irrational prejudices relating to religion/ region/ caste has proven to be the death knell of pragmatic public policy and redressal of genuine development challenges. To sustain a democracy as vibrant as ours, a hefty price in the form of

exclusive growth is being paid.” A 21 Year Old Indian Female Student.

“Currently, major emphasis is laid on leaving an everlasting mark in Indian history lest focusing on building a strong nation. In India, you could either vote for corrupt govt or corrupt plus dictatorial govt.” – A 19 Year Old Indian Female Student.

“Our government is very good, people just don't seem to understand how fortunate we are. We had the good years from Labour but this drove our country to the ground and so there needs to be a time for austerity and to impose it now is better than being in a worse situation later. I feel the current government is one of the best we've ever had and yet the media portrays it to be an evil because shocking headlines get more money (I apologise if this isn't the correct context you were looking for but what does the machinery of government mean...)” – An 18 year old British Female Student.

“India ie Bharat, as on the constitutional - institutional level is indeed one of the inclusive state machinery. But it is the loopholes which are becoming a serious and constant threat to the nation. Religious fundamentalism, ignorance to North-eastern states, Unequal representation of gender, no recognition to homosexuality, etc are leading the state and its machinery to become more of 'polyarchy'.” – A 21 Year Old Indian Female Analyst.

“In Australia, we have a number of democratic cross-checks and safeguards (a relatively independent high court, the parliamentary system which allows for smaller parties to hold the balance of power) which is necessary, because many of our individual politicians are incompetent idiots and the main parties govern through politics rather than through policies.” – A 54 Year Old Australian Education Consultant.

“It is non-representative democracy, where the media is run by a plutocracy that supports government. The apparatus of state is oppressive and intrusive and there is little way of getting redress.” A 50 Year Old British Female.

“My nation, Catalonia, has a limited machinery of government due to the Constitutional framework within which it is embedded. Being a part of Spain, does not only mean Catalonia is not legally recognized as a nation (in fact, it is recognized as a "nationality"). My country,

Spain's machinery of government has a crucial weight on the Spanish political framework - arguably more than it should - for it is evident that the judiciary is subordinated to the interest of the political elites in the most important decisions. The members of the Constitutional Court are appointed by Congress, leading to a two-party division within the Court and thus leading to decisions influenced by strong biases. Due to the historical two-party division of Congress, the government really calls the shots, be them legislative, executive or judiciary. Media is increasingly controlled by the country's top corporations. Freedom of speech is allowed but the means to articulate the diversity in speech is also strongly limited due to this economic oligopoly on the private media and party bias of public media.” A 22 Year Old Catalan/Spanish Student of Public Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

4. MINORITIES, DEMOCRATIC STATES AND EXCLUSION

Minorities are the marginalized people, treated indifferently on the dissemination of social resource and economic capital. The people struggle to get represented in the legal, socio-economic or political system and are largely underrepresented in these domains. A minority tends to have a different aspect of interaction with the state, as the legal system might not be favoring or the majorities may ill-treat them. For an instance, in a research by the Sociology Professor, Richard Lundman, at the Ohio State University, it was observed that the Police, largely white, target the Black or other minorities for the traffic stop and treats them differently. It could be said that the interaction of the minorities with the state and the state machinery is way too different from what a regular individual in majority would have. An argument to favor this could be cited by the findings of the Sachar Committee Report in 2006, which enumerates the following findings-

- a. It stated that Muslims are the highly marginalized community of the country and their status is below the actual condition of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes of the country.
- b. The representation of the Muslim in the machinery of the government is below 2.5%, which is very less in comparison to their population which rises above the 14%.

The problems of the minorities in the country is largely the lack of social security, courtesy to all the religious based riots (Muzzafarnagar Riots), sexual identity based violence (violence towards the transgender) and the identity clash with the majority community. Also, the equity and equality is undermined by the legal malpractice and also, the differential attitude of the executive wing towards people from the less affluent class.

It is worthy to discuss the democracy dimensions: formal and substantive. The formal depicts a form of governmentalization wherein the people vote up their state leader and the decision making process largely falls under the ambit of the state, and moreover, under the interest of the majorities.

In the substantive democracy, the decision making regime largely looks upon the rights of every individual and ensures the fundamental rights for all, on largely human and civic right values. A situation with tends to not exist in the Indian reality.

In a report by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), it was observed since the advent of the Modi Government in the India that RSS and VHP had tried or successfully made a number of derogatory comments on the religion based minorities and there had been reported cases of forced conversion and violence. This shows that the experience of these minorities with these local political units is not very smooth and supportive. For an instance, the experience of the region-based minorities in the Delhi, largely North East people, is not inclusive and hence to fight for their identity, they have to link themselves to the political units representing their homeland and culture, largely the North East Societies.

The major leaders of the States such as Subramaniam Swamy's have alleged that "Minorities in India feel unsafe. We all should unite and fight against it." Also, Simranjit Mann criticized the political parties stating that "BJP and Congress are two sides of a same coin and minorities are neither safe in BJP rule nor in Congress rule." These statements are largely the reflective of the feelings of the minorities towards the encounters and atrocities of the democratic state.

In India, even after the verdict of the Supreme Court, Transgenders still faces a number of discrimination.

In a report by the Indian Express in August 2015, it was informed that Transgender people still face issues in generating the Identity related documents such as ration card, passport or Aadhar card. It was supported by the study of the Jindal Global Law School which enumerates that people still did not seem to understand them and the issues related not issuing of identity card came largely from Delhi, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Gujarat. It is been observed that the verdict of April 15 2014 is still finding hard to be implemented in various states. Transgender also face issues in the healthcare system as in their medical issues are different and even the hospital seems to not understand whether to take them in male ward or female. So far, Tamil Nadu had been the only state to have Transgender Welfare Policy, which seeks to provide housing assistance, assistance in issuing citizenship documents, educational aid and sexuality related free surgeries at the government hospital.

In a documentary seen by the author at the YouTube, it was found that a few transgenders who were living in Saket, Delhi were treated indifferently by police, started upon and was often booted away with Lathis. This shows the atrocities of the state institution on the minorities.

Minorities and Dalits were often discriminated in registering FIRs, a recent case of Greater Noida, and often face issues in acquiring the public amenities and incentives. In Karnataka, Barber Shops denied hair cut to the Dalits people (The Hindu, 2011) and often were neglected to take admission to schools or enter temples. Narendra Modi in May 2015 raised voice against this discrimination and compelled people not to discriminate people on the basis of caste, creed or race. (Deccan Chronicle, 2015)

REFERENCES

- Narendra Modi bats for minority rights, says won't tolerate discrimination on caste, creed, Deccan Chronicle, <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/150507/nation-current-affairs/article/will-not-tolerate-any-discrimination-based-caste-creed> (2015)
- Discrimination Most Found, The Hindu, <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/editorial-on-discrimination-against-dalits/article7190812.ece> (May, 2015)

MISHRA : STATE, POLITICAL ECONOMY AND GOVERNANCE

What are the essential elements of a State? Rohini DasGupta,
<http://www.preservearticles.com/201104215738/what-are-the-elements-of-a-state.html>

Sachar Committee, Wikipedia- the Free Encyclopedia,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sachar_Committee

Hearn-Branaman, J. O. (2014). *The Political Economy of News in China: Manufacturing Harmony*. Rowman & Littlefield. Wikipedia. ((n.d.). *North Korea- Wikipedia*. Retrieved from Wikipedia- the free Encyclopedia :
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Korea#Media