

NEW HORIZONS

Independent India has been the stage for a series of revolutions of which the most apparent is the political revolution. India won freedom mainly through peaceful and non-violent methods. This was a great event not only for India but for the entire world. It meant the substitution of discussion and reason in place of armed struggle and bitter conflicts as means to the solution of political and other problems. It was also an assertion of the democratic principle, for the essence of democracy is that it is government by persuasion while in all other forms of administration, changes come about only through violence. In a democracy, ballots take the place of bullets. This brings about a qualitative change in the relations amongst the different sections of the community. If reason is the method to be used against a foreign power, it follows even more that reason must be the instrument for exercising authority within the state. It is therefore not an accident that free India elected to be a democratic republic. Given the ideals for which the Indian political leaders fought and the form the struggle had taken, it was inevitable that the Union of India should be established on the basis of democracy and the recognition of equal rights for all.

From the acceptance of democracy follows the 'rule of law'. Justice is the basis of all societies and whenever the foundations of justice are shaken great empires fall. In the past, however, justice had often been derived from the will of an individual or a group. The king meted out justice to all his subjects. Aristocratic or oligarchic orders dispensed justice to others after safeguarding their own privileges. In all such social and political organizations, there was an element of arbitrariness. In India, justice had been further diluted by the existence of islands of privilege. The hierarchical structure of Indian society has, since time immemorial, allotted different duties to different groups and individuals on the basis of birth. Caste or *varṇa* may have originally begun as a function of ability, but very soon caste degenerated into social stratification based on birth. In consequence, there was one law for the Brāhmanas and another for the Śūdras. Things did not improve after the Turks, popularly called the Pathāns, and the Mughals established their rule. During the Pathān regime, the Pathān had rights superior to those of other subjects. Similarly, during the Mughal times, the Mughals claimed precedence over every other section of the people. The British professed to adhere to the concept of the 'rule of law' in which all citizens are equal. They diluted the principle by providing special juries for European on trial. In practice, the 'rule of law' was still more defied and this was perhaps inescapable so long as an alien power ruled over subjects of different races.

The Union of India has for the first time established the 'rule of law' throughout the Indian territories. For the first time in Indian history, all citizens are equal and subject to the jurisdiction of the same authority. The distinction between the ruler and the ruled has been abolished. Privileges based on birth are no longer recognized. Religion or language, caste or community no longer guarantee any special privileges, with the single exception of certain under-privileged sections of the people who have been given safeguards to compensate for the past wrongs. The Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the other backward classes have been given certain special concessions. This is only in education, economic and administrative matters and does not in any way dilute the principle of equality in the eye of law. It can therefore truly be said that the 'rule of law' which is the special concomitant of democracy has for the first time been promulgated in India.

Special mention may be made of one section of the under-privileged who have suffered disabilities from time immemorial. It is not known when women were first relegated to an inferior position in human society. Almost all ancient civilizations denied them the rights of citizenship. There were no doubt some brilliant exceptions, but by and large women were subordinate to men in almost all historical societies. Islam was one of the earliest social systems to recognize women as legal personalities, but practice varied widely from theory and in Muslim societies also women generally had an inferior position. In Europe, women had to fight for legal and political rights, but in free India, women achieved equality with men without any bitterness or strife. One reason may be that Indian women had taken part in the struggle for independence in a way which has few parallels. In struggles for freedom elsewhere, women have generally inspired men to fight but in India women shared equally in the fight against foreign domination. This, and the enlightened vision of Indian leaders, assured women a place of equality and honour in the political life of the country. Two women in pre-independence India became presidents of Indian National Congress. After 1947, Indian women have held the posts of ministers, ambassadors and members of state legislatures and the Parliament. Today, there are women in the foreign service as well as various administrative and technical services. India also elected a woman to be the Prime Minister after the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Another feature of the political revolution which has taken place with the advent of independence is even more significant. Geography has marked out the Indian sub-continent as a special unit demarcated from the rest of the world. Her geographical exclusiveness has saved India from the great human floods which have swept through Central Asia and Europe. From ancient times the Indian people have striven for unity. Poets have dreamt of Indian unity. We find, not only in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* but also in the verses of Kālidāsa, a yearning for

the unity. In *Meghadūta* and *Raghuvamśa*, there are marvellous descriptions of the Indian landscape seen from the synoptic vision of a great poet. Religious teachers have also sought this unity. The Buddha and Mahāvīra literally walked thousands of miles and preached the message of compassion, understanding and unity. Śaṅkarācārya rebelled against the Buddhist thought but recognized equally the need of unity for India. He was also an extensive traveller and established four *maths*—in the north, the east, the south and the west to mark the unity of the land.

Religious teachers and great poets did succeed in establishing some kind of cultural unity. This has held in spite of political vicissitudes and in fact given Indian culture the unique character it has. There has also been economic unity of a type. In the earlier days, when transport was primitive and modern means of communication unknown, economic organization and activities throughout the world were local or at best regional. There was some international trade, but it was only for articles which were compact in size and high in value or as in the case of Indian cotton, steel and sugar, whose production was limited to an exclusive region of the globe. As in many other regions, Indian economy was based on agriculture and the village community. Each village or group of villages was therefore more or less self-sufficient and the concept of an all India economy was barely known. 'Alāu'd-dīn made an attempt to control the prices of essential commodities in Delhi and the adjoining areas. Akbar through his efforts to replace barter economy by a money economy did make a small dent, but by and large Indian economy remained village-based and local till the middle of the 19th century when the introduction of the railways bound India together in hoops of steel.

Attempts at political unification have been persistent and yet foredoomed to failure. From the earliest times, the Indian people have sought to give some kind of political expression to their basic unity. The mythical Bharata gave the name *Bhāratavarṣa* to this land. In the epics, there are records of *Aśvamedha* and *Rājasūya yājnas* by kings who sought to become *Rājacakravartī* or emperors. In historical times, Candragupta Maurya did succeed in establishing a state which covered a major part of India. Later, Candragupta Vikramāditya sought to emulate his example. Still later, Harṣavardhana and Pulakeśin II made separate attempts to unify India and succeeded only in defeating one another. 'Alāu'd-dīn also sought to establish an Indian empire. Later, Akbar did consolidate his sway over half of India and what is more important, sought to give an ideological basis for political unity. Aurangzeb extended the boundaries of the Mughal empire and after him the Marāṭhās made a similar attempt to unify India politically.

All these attempts at the establishment of a unified Indian empire however failed. One major reason was that the technological conditions for ruling a vast territory like India had not been achieved. Administration

requires continual inter-change of information and orders between the centre and the administered areas. This was from the nature of the case difficult because of the non-existence of facilities like the railways and the telegraph. Even as late as the middle of the 19th century, it took more than a month to travel from Delhi to Calcutta. The journey from Delhi to Madras obviously took longer still. In fact, the fastest a man could move would perhaps be about 80 km. a day by using relays of horses. There is an interesting story of how Akbar quelled a rebellion in Gujarāt by travelling night and day and reaching there within eleven days. The rebels found it hard to believe that an ordinary human being could travel so fast and surrendered out of awe, even though Akbar had barely thirty men with him when he appeared on the scene.

The second reason why all former attempts at political unification of India failed was that in the past all such attempts were based on military conquest. Unification followed from the might of an emperor who wanted to extend his sway throughout the different regions of the land. Alternatively it was due to the ambition of a clan or region to exercise mastery over others. Whether it be the Maurya or the Gupta empire, the Coḷa or the Cālukya domination, the Turkish Sultanate or the Mughal empire, in every case political unification was based on the domination of an individual, a family or a group. A major reason why the Marāṭhā attempt to establish an empire failed was the refusal of the Rājput̄s and Jāts to submit to Marāṭhā domination. All past attempts of empire-building were, therefore, foredoomed to failure on the grounds of technological inadequacy and natural human resentment against military domination.

Today the whole of India is united not because any one region has established sway over others, but because all parts of India have voluntarily joined to form a federated republic. Every state in the Union, whether large or small, has equal recognition under the Constitution. The people of every state have the same rights and duties. Technologically also conditions are ripe for a single state. Railways in the beginning, later the automobile and today the aeroplane have practically abolished distances. One can travel from one part of India to any other part within five or six hours. Messages can be flashed from one corner to another in a matter of seconds. Queries are made and answers obtained within hours. In fact, a paradoxical situation has been created where a man can travel from Delhi to Trivandrum in a shorter time than it takes to go from Delhi to Jaunpur.

The acceptance of democracy, the establishment of the 'rule of law', the adoption of constitutional and legal methods for bringing about social change, the conquest of space and time, revolutionary technical advances and above all the spirit of accommodation, equality and freedom have for the first time created the conditions where the five hundred million people of India can think, feel and act as one nation.

II

Economic motives may not be the only factor governing human conduct, but there is no doubt that they are among the most powerful forces that shape human destiny. India had at one time appeared as El Dorado to foreign visitors like Megasthenes or Fa-hien. They had commented upon the high standards of honesty prevailing in the country. They had noted with surprise that theft and robbery were almost unknown and 'lock and key' were practically never used. It is interesting to note that the Indian word for lock, 'tālā' is of Arabic origin and that for key, 'chābī', is of Portuguese origin. The average Indian was noted for his honest and upright conduct. Even today many people in the villages, and especially sections among the Ādivāsīs and other tribal people, display the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Without a deterioration in the Indian character, the British would not have succeeded in establishing their rule. The economic deterioration which set in the wake of British domination led to further deterioration in the Indian character. Before the advent of the British, Indian economy was predominantly rural and depended on a combination of agriculture and agro-industries for providing work and living to the people. Villages were still vital and offered opportunity for some sort of education, work and recreation to the rural population. As the industrial revolution gathered momentum in Europe, it sought larger markets. A direct result was large-scale import of various types of manufactured goods which steadily disrupted the Indian economy. The drift to the town is a general characteristic of the modern age, but in India this drift proved disastrous for the national economy in almost every sphere.

After independence, reconstruction of Indian economy demanded a complete reorientation in agriculture. For almost 3,000 years Indian agriculture had hardly changed. The type of plough and bullock of which we have evidence in the Harappan times still persists in large areas of the country. Through the ages there have been minor improvements in agriculture; but the terrifying expansion in population which has taken place in the last fifty years has made old forms of agriculture totally inadequate to national needs. It has been estimated that the population of India in the beginning of the 19th century was perhaps not more than 100 or 125 millions. By the end of the century, the 200 million mark had been passed. The 1931 census gave a population of about 300 millions for undivided India. Today, it has crossed the 500 million mark. Unless the population explosion can be regulated, India may have to face a population of about 1,000 millions before the end of the century. This will mean not only shortage of food but probably famine and unemployment on a scale that may threaten the very existence of the nation.

Indian agriculture has shown in recent years a remarkable power of expansion and growth. This is fortunate, as all development ultimately depends on the progress of agriculture. Without an assured supply of food, neither individuals nor nations can prosper. The Indian achievement in agriculture since independence is striking. Food production in the early fifties was about 55 million tonnes. Today it is approaching 110 million tonnes. However India still has to depend, to a small extent, on imports.

Import of foodgrains need not in itself be condemned. There are countries like the United Kingdom which have deliberately decided on a policy of import so that the productive energies of the nation may be more usefully employed otherwise. Unfortunately, India has not been in a position to pay for her imports and has been forced to depend on the generosity of other countries, specially the U.S.A. There is growing recognition that the country must either produce all the food it needs or buy it without depending on the charity or goodwill of others. Recent breakthroughs in agriculture suggest that this can be done. The average production of paddy per hectare has till recently been about 1,700 kg. With imported seeds, more fertilizers and better irrigation, individual farmers have produced as much as 2,900 kg. per hectare in certain areas. These may be exceptional, but by and large production has increased over vast areas. Tamil Nādu, the Punjab and Uttar Pradesh have established new records of production. A comparatively unfertile area like Rānāghāt in West Bengal has given an yield of almost 1,500 kg. per hectare. Even at the old rates of production, the shortage in India has never been more than 15 to 20 percent. If the production can be doubled, and in some cases it has increased five or six-fold, not only will the shortage disappear but India may become once again an exporter of grain.

Similar developments have taken place in respect of the major cash crops. For decades, if not centuries, India has exported agricultural raw material on a vast scale. Some Indian products had found an international market even in the pre-historic times. There is reference to the use of Indian timber for a Babylonian temple built several hundred years before the birth of Christ. Throughout the ages, special types of Indian agricultural produce have found a ready market. Even today tea, jute, oil-cakes and groundnuts form some of the major components of Indian exports. Since independence there has been substantial, though not spectacular, progress in all these fields. There are reasons to believe that the progress will be both steadier and more rapid in the coming years.

The major ground for optimism lies in the slow but steady return of the educated classes to agriculture. For almost 200 years, agriculture was looked down upon and educated men considered it *infra dig* to take to farming. Fortunately this mentality is changing, partly by pressure of circumstances and partly through the recognition of the dignity of labour.

In the first hundred years of British rule in India, literate men found comfortable jobs in a government office or a mercantile firm. The situation had become difficult even before the end of the 19th century. Since then the pressure of educated men for various white collar jobs has steadily increased. Today, for each job there are at least a hundred applicants. Much of the unrest and frustration in the country is due to the presence of a very large number of the educated unemployed who are eager to find new avenues of employment. The prosperity of the farmers and a growing recognition of the importance of agriculture are slowly attracting educated men and women to the land. Retired army officers and civilians as well as successful practitioners of law are discovering that work on the land not only gives a higher income, but also comfort and satisfaction of a type which the restricted life in the city can never match.

The agricultural revolution has been accompanied by an industrial revolution which, in a way, is even more far-reaching. Indian capitalism never got a chance of full development because of political exigencies. The hierarchical structure of Indian society not only prevented free blossoming of talent but restricted the flow of knowledge from one stratum of society to another. This is perhaps a major reason why the scientific and industrial revolution took place in Europe and not in India.

The Industrial revolution gave to British economy an impetus that sent it far ahead of all competitors. England which was a large importer of manufactured goods even in the 17th century was, by the middle of the 18th century, a major exporter of finished products. Indian textiles had earned world-wide fame from the earliest times. The possession of an Indian muslin was for long a mark of aristocracy throughout the western world. The industrial revolution changed all this almost overnight. Through the use of machinery, Britain produced textiles on a scale which not only met local needs but left a sizable surplus for export. For several decades, British goods could not compete in quality or price with Indian products. Legislation was therefore undertaken by which the import of Indian textiles into the British Isles attracted severe penalties. Improvements in the quality and volume of British production and rigorous restrictive laws combined to shut out Indian textiles from at first the British and later the entire European market. Since this was the major Indian export of that period, the consequences to the Indian economy can be easily imagined.

India suffered because the traditional manufacturers languished under the impact of unfair foreign competition. She suffered even more because she could not take to the production of any of the new types of goods that were coming into use. From being a major exporter, India by the beginning of the 20th century was totally dependent on foreign imports for meeting most of her requirements.

The picture was dismal in the field of consumer goods of almost every

type. It is true that a change for the better began in the last decades of the 19th century. The political awakening of the country gave a further fillip to the development of Indian industry. The Indian textile trade received a great impetus from the *Swadeshi* and Boycott movements of 1905–1906. Indians began to look forward to a time when they would be free not only politically but also economically. One of the landmarks of this period was the establishment of an Iron and Steel Mill by Jamshedji Tata at a town which has since been named after him.

The stress of the first World War compelled further industrial development in India. During the second World War, industrialization received still greater impetus. With all imports stopped because of war, India had to produce not only consumer goods but machinery of various types to keep the economy going. India also became the base for supporting the Allied war effort both in East Asia and West Asia. In consequence, new types of industry came into being and Indian businessmen again began to think in terms of an independent Indian economy.

The iron and steel mills of Jamshedpur, Kulti and Burhānpur were established before independence. There was also a small steel mill at Bhadrāvati in Mysore, but the real development in metallurgy has taken place only after India became free. Indian progress in this field is striking by any standard. The United States of America increased steel production from about a million to five million tonnes between the year 1870 and 1890. Czarist Russia used to produce over three million tonnes of iron and steel in 1916–17. Starting from that base, the Soviet Union increased its production of iron and steel to about 18 million tonnes in 1937. India increased her production of iron and steel from less than one million tonnes in 1946–47 to about six million tonnes in 1966–67. Indian progress in steel production was thus more significant than that of either the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. in the corresponding period. Perhaps the only country in the world which can show a higher rate of increase in the production of iron and steel is Japan which pushed up its production of iron and steel from 0.7 million tonnes in 1920 to 7.00 million tonnes in 1940.

Along with this striking expansion in the production of iron and steel, there has been parallel development in almost every area of industry. India is still deficient in non-ferrous metals but since independence, production has expanded considerably in many items. India did not have a machine manufacturing industry worth the name before independence. Today the installed capacity in the country is capable of producing the most sophisticated types of machines and plants. Chemical industry has also proliferated on a vast scale. Today, India has a growing petro-chemical industry which promises to solve some of our basic industrial and economic problems. Equally remarkable has been the development in electronics and various industries connected with the use of atomic energy.

These new types of industries as well as the development of the infra-

structure needed for economic expansion hold out the promise of a brilliant economic future provided the resources in men and material are properly used. There is room for improvement in the use of both. In spite of striking development in almost every line of industry, India is still largely dependent on foreign sources for industrial raw materials, finished goods and technical know-how. There has so far been inadequate attention to the development of indigenous design and technology. There should be no hesitation in borrowing technology from abroad. In fact no country has made any significant advance without drawing heavily upon the industrial advances of other countries. With the growing consciousness of the need of developing indigenous technology and the potential which has been created through an enormous expansion in India's industrial life, there is every reason to hope that Indian scientists and technologists will play an increasingly important role in bringing about an economic renaissance that would be in keeping with the political re-awakening of the land.

III

The far-reaching political and economic changes sketched above were the result of an intellectual renaissance which had affected almost every aspect of Indian life. In fact, these political and economic developments might not have been possible without a complete reconstruction of Indian education in the beginnings of the 19th century. One of the major weaknesses of India and indeed almost all Asian countries has been the absence of a public system of instruction. Education was for the elite and catered only to the intellect. The emphasis on development of the intellect was accompanied by a neglect of manual skills. In consequence, handicrafts continued through the transmission of skills from generation to generation but without any formal training in a technical institute. Europe made a breakthrough during the industrial revolution and developed technology through the application of science to industry. The European domination of the world for almost three centuries was a direct outcome of this intellectual advance by which education received a broader interpretation than accent on the development of the intellect alone.

The impact of Europe disturbed the placid water of India. The British rulers of the day did not, however, wish to transplant European education on Indian soil. It is true that the East India Company in the early years of the 19th century, made a start by providing funds for public instruction. The funds were, however, reserved for oriental learning with special emphasis on the study of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. In fact, some of the British rulers disliked the idea of imparting western education to Indian students. It was the initiative of Christian missionaries and non-official Indians that led to the establishment of schools and colleges imparting

education of the western type. The first English medium school in South India was opened in 1717 at Cuddalore. Richard Cobbe founded in 1719 a charity school at Bombay for poor European and Anglo-Indian children which was thrown open to Indian children in 1815. A charity school was established in Calcutta in 1720. The names of Alexander Duff of Calcutta, John Wilson of Bombay and William Miller of Madras will always occupy a place of honour in the history of western education in India. They could not however have succeeded without the pioneering activity of men like Jayanarayan Ghosal, Raja Rammohan Roy, Radhakanta Deb, Haji Mohammad Mohsin, Framjee Cowasjee, Rao Bahadur Maghubhai Karamchand, Premchand Roychand, Sreenivas Pillai, Hyder Jung, Raghavachariyar, Ganesh Gangadhar Shastri, Ranganath Mudaliar and later Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Syed Ahmad Khan, Dadabhai Naoroji and a host of others. The result was a revolutionary expansion of education which shattered old ideas and beliefs and created an intellectual ferment that ushered new India.

There has been much criticism of British rule in India and also of the system of education which they established. Macaulay through his famous Minute initiated the policy and Sir Charles Wood gave it a concrete shape. Any human institution has defects and the system of education developed in India during the British days is not free from blame. It cannot however be denied that this system of education disturbed the inertia of the Indian mind, helped to break down social barriers, removed old superstitions—even though at times new superstitions were introduced—and generally helped to create a sense of nationhood. Macaulay's prophecy that the extension of western education would ultimately lead to the dissolution of the British Indian empire has proved true. His other forecast that even when the British empire disappeared, Shakespeare and the English language would remain as part of the permanent heritage of Indians has proved equally true.

The major criticism against the system of education evolved during the days of British rule is that it was too narrow in quality as well as in quantity. Only a minute fraction of eligible pupils received the benefits of schooling. Even those who were fortunate enough to go to a school and later to a college were severely restricted in their choice of subjects. The syllabus was heavily weighted in favour of purely literary education. Science was neglected and technology was almost unknown. The curriculum was rigid and circumscribed and the small minority which received education was generally drawn away from agriculture, industry and commerce. In fact, the prevailing system of education tended to develop a bias against manual labour of every type. To educate a village boy very often meant the loss of a potential farmer, craftsman or technician.

After independence there has been literally an educational explosion. In 1947, there were barely 30 million children receiving elementary educa-

tion. Today the number is approaching 80 millions. The number of pupils in secondary schools has also increased four-fold, from less than 3 millions to over 10 millions. Even more spectacular has been the growth in numbers in higher education of every type. The number of students in various types of post-secondary institutions was barely a quarter million in 1947. Today their number has exceeded two millions. In fact, the proportion of pupils of the relevant age-group who go to universities or comparative institutions is perhaps higher in India than in any other country excepting the U.S.A. and possibly the U.S.S.R.

Equally remarkable has been the growth in the diversity of education offered in various types of institutions. At the elementary level itself, the evolution of basic education has introduced a new type of schools based on socially purposive activity. At the secondary level, many new streams have been introduced. Today a secondary school pupil can take courses in the humanities or science or technology or commerce or the arts. At the university level, the emphasis has shifted to science and technology. Before independence, there were few engineering colleges and they taught only at the undergraduate level. With the possible exception of the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore, there was hardly any institution in India which offered facilities for post-graduate studies and research in technology. The Nalini Ranjan Sarkar Committee had recommended as early as 1944 the establishment of four institutions of technology modelled after the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the U.S.A. and the Technische Hochschule in Zurich. One such institution was established in Kharagpur in 1951. Since then, five more institutions have been founded in Bombay, Madras, Kānpur, Delhi and Pilani. Simultaneously, the technological faculties in various universities have been strengthened. Advanced centres of study in science, technology and the humanities have also been established in a number of selected universities.

Not only has there been a spectacular increase in numbers and expansion of facilities in different directions, but simultaneously, special efforts have been made to educate those who for historical, economic or social reasons have been backward in education in the past. The number of Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe students in institutions of higher learning could be counted on one's fingers before the advent of independence. Today they have to be counted in tens, if not hundreds of thousands. Regions which in the past were denied facilities of education have received special attention. Today there is hardly any state or any region within a state which cannot offer opportunities of education of almost every type to its inhabitants.

A special reference should also be made to the progress of women's education in free India. Women had started to enter higher institutions of learning in the eighties of the last century but even ten years before independence, the number of women pupils in universities and colleges

was insignificant. In the early thirties of the present century, they numbered barely five per cent in post-secondary institutions while a woman in an engineering or technological institution was almost unknown. Some women had entered medical colleges but these institutions were overwhelmingly masculine. Within twenty years of the attainment of independence, a remarkable change has come over the scene. At the elementary level, girls form almost fifty per cent of the pupils. In the secondary and post-secondary stages also their proportion has shot up. When graduation lists are published—in the sciences, the humanities and even in technology—women often are found to occupy top positions. In both number and quality, wide-spread women's education is one of the most striking features of contemporary India.

With expanded opportunities of education has come a new awakening and new expectations among every section of the Indian people. Men and women who were formerly content to suffer disabilities and submit to what they regarded as the ministration of an unkind destiny today rebel against circumstances and seek to mould the world nearer to their heart's desire. Industrialization and urbanization are twin keys which govern their entry into a world of new opportunities. At the beginning of this century, some 80% of the Indian people depended on agriculture for their living. Today the figure has come down to 70% and there is a steady downward trend as more and more people take to industry. This is accompanied by a drift to the towns as well as slow urbanization of villages. Once people become accustomed to the amenities which cities and towns offer, they refuse to accept the hardships and disabilities of rural life. The more ambitious move to the towns. This sets in motion a vicious circle in which people move to the towns because of lack of opportunities in rural areas and opportunities in such areas diminish because able people move away. This is a modern phenomenon common to all countries, but in India it has reached alarming proportions. In countries like the U.S.A. or U.K. a contrary trend has started. People living in overcrowded metropolitan cities often seek to move out into the country for quiet and peace. The more enterprising seek to create conditions where they can enjoy rural surroundings as well as the amenities of civic life. This process has just started in India and the emergence of a new class of educated farmers is helping this trend.

One immediate result of urbanization is the weakening of the bonds of religion, caste and family. In rural areas, every one knows almost everything about every one else. In urban areas, one hardly takes note of one's next-door neighbour. The anonymity of the town is at times heartless, but it has one redeeming feature. It liberates the individual from the tyranny of the family or the caste and offers him greater freedom and scope for developing the personality. This was particularly necessary in a country like India where family claims have been so insistent that

the individual has at times been submerged. In independent India, many of the old bonds are in the process of dissolution. If at times it creates a sense of uncertainty and doubt, it also offers an opportunity of development to the individual which did not exist before.

There have been protests against caste from the earliest days of Indian history. Not only the Buddha but Mahāvīra and many other religious teachers declaimed against caste. After the advent of Islam, the institution of caste was again challenged, but paradoxically there was also an accession of strength to the institution as a defence mechanism against the aggressive proselytization of the new faith. Throughout the middle ages *sādhus*, saints, *faqīrs* and *dervishes* preached a religion of humanity which transcended all class, caste and racial barriers. Men like Kabīr and Nānak, Rāmānanda and Caitanya, Khwājah Mū'īnu'd-dīn and Tukārāma, Nizām-u'd-dīn and Rāmādāsa preached the unity of all men. In the modern period, a succession of reformers and leaders beginning with Raja Rammohun Roy and ending with Tagore and Gandhi have also sought to denounce the tyranny of caste. The Indian Constitution has recognized the validity of this humanitarian outlook by making untouchability an offence. Nevertheless, the rigours of caste have not yet totally disappeared.

The citadel of caste is however falling down under the impact of industrialization and urbanization with all their implications. The factory values the labourer for his contribution to the production of wealth and pays little regard to his caste. The town with its anonymity helps the less privileged to forget their disabilities and mix on more or less equal terms with strangers. Even more significant has been the impact of rural transport. Country buses are packed like sardines and the irate driver or conductor has little time to pay any regard to the caste susceptibility of any of his passengers. The railways and even more the country buses have perhaps done more for breaking caste barriers than all the religious teachers and reformers from the days of the Buddha. Electricity is helping in the process by taking modern education, modern industry and modern communications into the most remote areas. It would not be rash to predict that the impact of these forces will make caste obsolete before the end of the century.

IV

The far reaching political, economic and social changes described above would have been remarkable at any time and for any people. Normally, such revolutionary changes have taken place only through violence and disruption that destroyed the existing society and created a new order out of the broken units. In the case of India, the transition has been predominantly peaceful. There were no doubt several conflicts among

different sections of the Indian people before independence. Things took an ugly turn when, on the eve of independence, the two major communities of the country seemed poised against each other in regular armed camps. Indian independence was ultimately attained at the cost of unity.

When a live organism is cut into two, dislocation and suffering are inevitable. In the wake of the partition of India, millions were uprooted. Accepted standards of conduct were destroyed overnight. Men and women, who in normal times were peace-loving citizens and governed by human considerations, lost their balance and became temporarily insane. Acts of cruelty, oppression and barbarism occurred which are not only against the Indian but against any human tradition. For a while it appeared that men had relapsed into a state of barbarism where the law of the jungle ruled. During this period of turmoil, distress and fear, one voice rang out in the clearest tones of humanism, rationality and democracy. Mahatma Gandhi pitted himself against the rising clouds of darkness. Even though he was physically destroyed, his spirit triumphed and the warring sub-continent found in him a symbol of hope and restoration of human values.

The independence of India set in motion a process of changes which have had far-reaching effects throughout the world. Described as the keystone in the arch of imperialism, it was perhaps inevitable that the arch should come crumbling down, once India became free. When India was fighting her battle of independence, she was fighting not only for her own freedom but for the end of all colonial regimes throughout the world. It is therefore not surprising that Indian independence was followed by the liberation of almost all occupied territories throughout the world. The liberation of Asia was followed by the liberation of Africa. Within ten years of the attainment of Indian freedom, almost the whole of Africa has shaken off the shackles of imperial rule. Africa is today proud and free—a new member in the comity of nations in spite of the thousands of years during which men had struggled against nature in that vast continent.

Indian freedom released new forces within the country and outside. There was a rising crescendo of expectations and it was not surprising that the reality did not always match the hopes. We have mentioned before the massive advances of India in the fields of agriculture, industry and commerce. In the field of education, the addition of some 65 million places in elementary and secondary schools within the brief period of twenty years is no mean achievement. This is a remarkable feat and compares favourably with the expansion of education in countries like the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Japan and the U.K. In terms of numbers, the Indian achievement is magnificent, but judged from the point of view of proportion and even more from the point of view of quality, the Indian achievement is not up to expectations.

An unfortunate manifestation in recent times has been the growing

emphasis on narrow loyalties. Before the advent of independence, Indians were united in a common fight against an alien power. Opposition to foreign rule served as a bond of unity and glossed over many internal dissensions and differences. With the attainment of independence, a common focus of opposition disappeared. With it disappeared the bonds of unity which had bound together the Indian people. In consequence, we find today divisive tendencies in many parts of the country. India is and has always been a land of sharp contrasts. Her per capita income is among the lowest in the world and yet some of the richest men of the world are Indian citizens. Indians include some of the most sophisticated men even in the modern age and other Indians are among the simplest and the most primitive people of the world. Every stage of civilization and culture—from cowdung age to the age of atomic energy—co-exist on the Indian sub-continent. It would have been surprising if with her vast territory and such diversity among her people, Indians had been a completely homogenous people united in every way.

The reality is that the Indian people are a conglomeration of many races and tribes who have throughout the ages slowly worked towards unity. In such a context, it is inescapable that there will be minority groups of many types based on many considerations. There are groups organized on the basis of religion, language, region, custom, traditions or race. In fact, if one starts a close scrutiny, it would be difficult to discover any majority group in this vast sub-continent. Even the Hindus—who may be united against non-Hindus—show divisions in their customs, sects, clans and linguistic groups. It is perhaps better to describe India as a land of minorities in which the majority itself is fluctuating and differs in shape, size and texture according to the principle of organization we may seek.

The various minority groups in India share with minority groups in all countries a common difficulty. Each minority group is keen on preserving its autonomy and culture, and afraid of being submerged and lost in the majority. The majority where it exists—and where there is no majority, the single largest group—becomes suspicious of the minorities' insistence on autonomy. It is apprehensive that such demands may lead to fragmentation and weakening of national integrity. The conflict between these two points of view can be solved only if pride in group culture can be combined with pride in the achievement of the nation. Whether it be the question of Nāgāland or Kashmīr, of Tamil-speaking people or people speaking one of the Ādivāsī languages, divisive symptoms which appear today are mere expressions of the concern of different minority groups to retain their identity in the weltering mass of Indian humanity.

Of all the problems which face independent India, the most insistent and at the same time the most dangerous is the failure to provide necessary openings for the rapidly increasing population of the land. We have seen

that till now the production of food has on the whole kept pace with the growth of population. With an agricultural breakthrough, the rate of production can be accelerated. Simultaneously measures have been initiated and must be pursued with greater vigour to ensure that the rate of population growth is brought under control. The enormous improvement in national health services after independence is a major cause for the acceleration in population growth. The birth rate in India has fallen over the last half a century. In 1901, live births per thousand were 51; today they are about 37. This fall in the birth rate has however had no effect because of the sharper fall in the death rate. Before independence, the death rate in India was one of the highest in the world—about 33 per thousand. Today the death rate has been reduced to about 16 per thousand and there are indications that the death rate may be lowered still further with improvements in preventive and curative medical services. Increased social services demand even stricter control of the growth of population and this must be one of major tasks of independent India.

The control of population growth will demand family planning on an extensive scale. This can be effective only through the individual approach of educated men and women. Mass scale advertisements in newspapers and posters on the streets are likely to do more harm than good. To approach every individual family will require the services of about a million men and women for the half a million or more villages of India. Equally urgent is the demand for electrification and better communications in rural areas. Capital intensive industries cannot absorb our enormous manpower, but electrification—whether through thermal or hydro-electric or atomic means—offers the prospect of converting every village home into a miniature factory where family members can work in a congenial atmosphere without the friction and clashes that are inescapable in any large-sized factory. Minute additions to the income of each of the hundred and odd million families of India will have a snowball effect by creating demands for all kinds of consumer goods. This will give a fillip to the diverse industries of the country and in turn provide the incentive for the development of heavy industries and the economic infra-structure. Once the present backlog of unemployment is wiped out, the present mood of frustration and despair will also disappear.

V

In one of his most remarkable statements, Rabindranath Tagore said that unity is not uniformity and only those who are different can unite. We have seen that the Indian Union has been constituted by the willing adherence of different sections of the Indian people to form a united Indian nation. So long as the Indian nation respects the claims of each of

its constituents, tries to mete out equal justice to all, the unity of India can never be in danger. It is only when there is an attempt by any element—whether religious or linguistic or political—to dominate over other units and impose its character on others that Indian unity faces danger. By its reconciliation of differences and recognition of unity in diversity, independent India has opened new horizons not only for herself but for the entire world. In the modern age, all societies must be multiple societies and these multiple societies must combine to form the one world in which alone the hope of man lies.

We have mentioned how the formation of the Indian Union marks a new departure in Indian history. In the past, there were empires when outstanding individuals conquered large territories and brought them under one control. We have also seen that these attempts at political unification of India failed, partly because technology had not reached a stage where a vast territory like India could be ruled from one centre. Aristotle said that the size of an ideal state must be such that a man can get on a hill-top and his voice carry to the farthest limits of the state. Today with telephone, radio and telecommunication, a man's voice can carry not only to the farthest corners of India but perhaps to the farthest corners of the world. Movement by train and bus and even more by aeroplane has helped to solve the problem of distance. In a way, still more important has been the invention and manufacture of large printing presses which can turn out newspapers and other material by tens of thousands within the hour.

Greater facility of movement has led to a vast expansion in the travelling habits of the people. In ancient times, a village 6 km. away was described as *videśa* or foreign country by a villager. Normally, he never moved more than 8 or 16 km. from his village. If he went on a pilgrimage, he often performed his own *śrāddha* before leaving. Today, thousands of villagers go on *Bhārata Darśana* and travel from one end of India to another not only to places of pilgrimage but also to see the country and with it some of the great monuments, ancient, medieval and modern built for artistic, industrial or other purposes. The Tāj Maḥal attracts today hundred of thousands of visitors every year. Bhākra Nāngal or Gāndhi Sāgar or the Atomic Energy Establishment at Trombay attract similar crowds. The sense of oneness has grown not only because people have voluntarily united to form one Republic, but also because they have far greater opportunities of mixing with one another and realizing that, though different in many ways, they all form part of one great nation.

This sense of unity has been further strengthened by various programmes undertaken by government as well as non-official agencies. All India Radio provides music of all regions for the benefit and delight of men and women of all regions. The Sāhitya Akademi started a programme of translating about a dozen classics of every major Indian language into

every other major Indian language, so that there would be a corpus of some two hundred books which would be the common heritage of all Indians. UNESCO cooperated in a further programme of translations in which some two hundred major classics of the world—Asian, African, European and American—would be available for translation into every major Indian language to stress the community of Indians with people of other countries and other cultures. There have been many intra-State exchanges of cultural troupes by which dancers and musicians of Kashmīr have performed in Kerala while similar troupes of Manipur have performed in Tamil Nādu. *Kathākali* of Kerala and *Bhārata Nāṭyam* of Tamil Nādu today rub shoulders with *Odissi* of Orissa and *Kathak* of Uttar Pradesh. In the world of culture, every part of India is proud of its own distinctive contribution and at the same time equally proud of the great achievement of Indian civilization in its infinite richness and complexity.

Perhaps for the first time in history, Indians have developed a consciousness of inner unity. In the past also there was a general feeling of Indianness, but it had not been given a firm intellectual and still less a political basis. One of the tragedies of India has been the failure to effect an intellectual synthesis of the great thoughts of ancient India with thoughts which came from Western Asia or Europe. During the period of British rule, western science as well as western political concepts influenced the thoughts and actions of Indians but the association generally remained external. In many cases, there was just a position of different elements without a real fusion among them. Independent India offers vast opportunities of synthesis where the various elements can be merged to form a coherent outlook which will retain the contribution of each giver and yet give to the totality a flavour that is characteristically Indian.

It is because of this development that independent India has within a brief period been able to make a mark in the international field. India has been a free nation for only a little over twenty five years. Economically, India is still at the receiving end of international economic transactions. In spite of the lack of any overwhelming political, economic and military strength, India's impact on international affairs has been striking. The First Asian Relations Conference was held in New Delhi on the eve of independence and gave a new sense of unity and purpose to all Asian peoples. The First Asian History Congress and the First Asian Literary Conference were also held in New Delhi. Still more important, the political conference held in New Delhi almost immediately after independence was a major factor in solving the Indonesian problem and led to the emergence of the Republic of Indonesia as a free entity in free Asia. It was again India which was largely responsible for enunciating the principle of peaceful co-existence and cooperation in economic and cultural matters in spite of differences in political and social organization. India's has always been a voice for reason and moderation in the councils of the United

Nations. It is not surprising that with this approach to political problems, India should play a leading role in both United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and Food and Agriculture Organisation. There have been occasions when India has spoken not only for herself but for other developing countries of the world. Perhaps the high watermark of India's achievement in the international field was the Bandung Conference where Jawaharlal Nehru played a leading role.

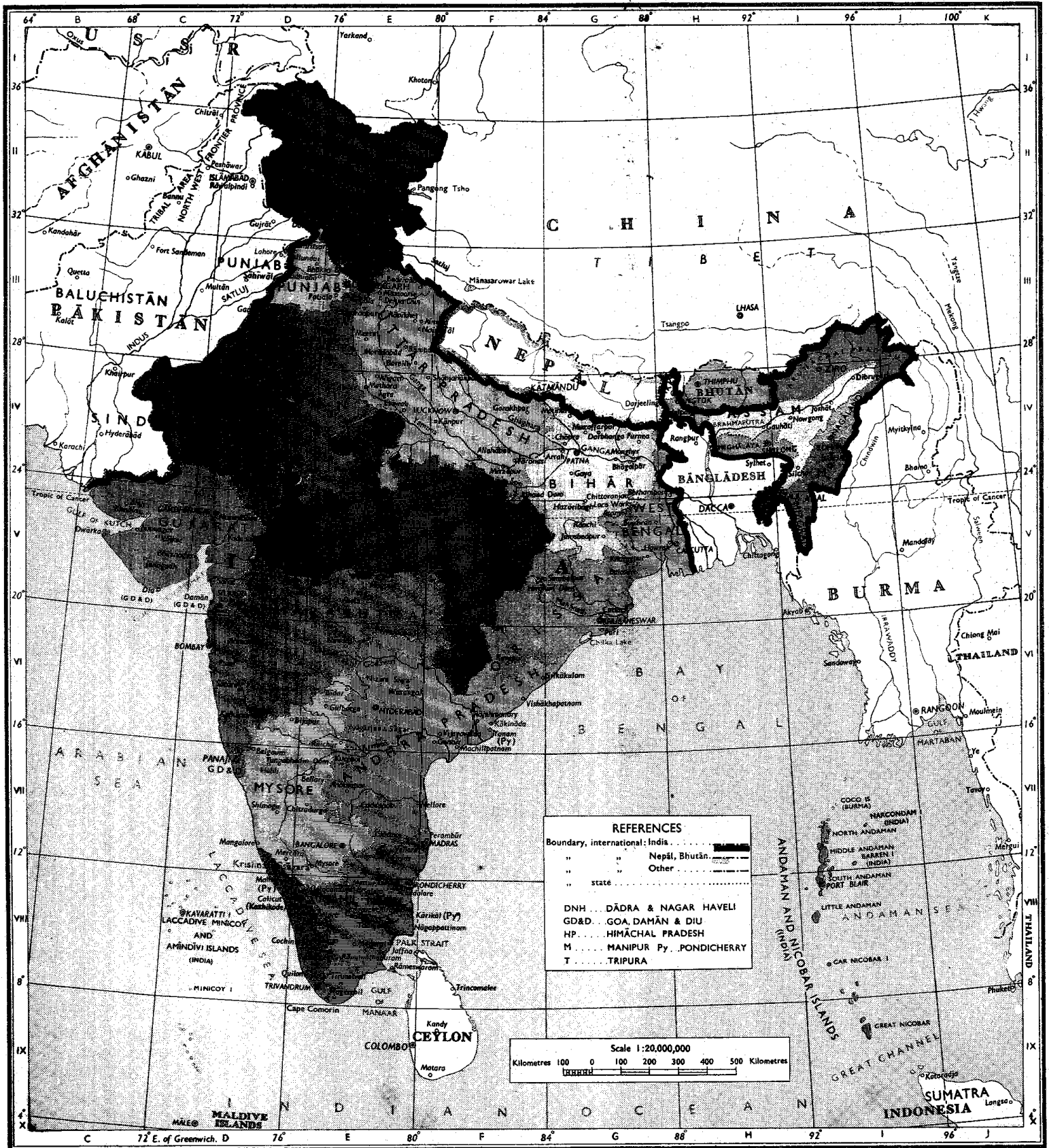
Independent India has also opened out new prospects for her children in almost every field of human activity. Before independence, able and ambitious young Indians had very limited opportunities for using their talents. For some twenty years before 1947, the highest ambition of an able young Indian was to get into the Indian Civil Service. The Army, the Navy and the Air Force were still largely the preserve of the British, though a small but gradually expanding opening had been made in this citadel of exclusiveness after the first World War. Today there is hardly any field anywhere in the world where Indians have not made a mark. Within India, the highest political offices as well as positions of responsibility and power in the administrative, the economic and the professional world have opened out to them. Opportunities have unfolded in the outside world as well. There are Indian scientists, technologists and educationists in practically every country of the world working either on their own or on behalf of the International Civil Service which has developed through the United Nations and its associated agencies.

The modern age is characterized by a new concept of technical assistance from more advanced to less advanced countries. India has been a recipient of such assistance in many fields, but even Indians do not always remember that she is equally a donor. In fact, the number of foreigners serving in India on various technical assistance programmes is less than the number of Indians who in one capacity or another are rendering technical assistance to various countries of the world. Such employment of Indians abroad is not confined to the economically and scientifically less developed countries. The U.S.A. and the U.K., like many of the developed Western European countries, have drawn heavily on Indian talent and it was perhaps a fitting recognition of this Indian contribution to the world pool of scientific knowledge that an Indian domiciled in the U.S.A. should be the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for original research in the mysteries of human heredity.

India has today not only embassies or missions in most countries of the world, but there are a large number of Indian students and teachers in many of them. Equally striking is the expansion of Indian industry and commerce beyond India's shores. From the beginning of recorded history, India was an exporter of cotton textiles, steel, sugar and finished goods of various types. In the last two hundred years, Indian export of finished goods had declined and she was reduced to the position of

mainly an exporter of raw materials. After independence the old trends have been revived. Today India exports many types of goods and seeks markets in the farthest corners of the world. Indian industrialists and entrepreneurs are helping to develop the Indian economy and simultaneously exploring possibilities of development in distant regions. They have carried India's industrial flag to the heart of Africa as well as some of the most industrially developed countries of the world. There is thus a renaissance in India which is expressing itself in almost every field of human activity and proving once again that the capacity of India to serve the world is as strong today as it was in the days of glory in the ancient and medieval past. Truly new horizons have opened out, horizons of hope, endeavour and fulfilment for new generations of Indians in the new dawn of independent India.

POLITICAL MAP OF INDIA



Res. No. 2653 HE/71-5200 '73.

Projection: Lambert Conical Orthomorphic.

Prepared and printed by the Directorate of Map Publication, Survey of India, for the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Govt. of India, New Delhi, with the permission of the Surveyor General of India.

The boundary of Meghalaya shown on this map is as interpreted from the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971, but has yet to be verified.

The territorial waters of India extend into the sea to a distance of twelve nautical miles measured from the appropriate base line.

The administrative headquarters of Haryana and Punjab are at Chandigarh, and of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya are at Shillong.

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