

UNIT 12 PATTERNS OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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12.0 OBJECTIVES

The unit discuss the pattern of political and economic development in the Korean peninsula since the surrender of Japan at the end of Second World War in 1945. After going through the unit you will be able to :

- understand how Korean peninsula was partitioned into South and North Korea;
- assess and compare the political systems that evolved in South and North Korea since partition;
- analyse the economic development strategies, the two halves have been pursuing; and
- examine the present economic state of affairs in both South and North Korea.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Korea is an ancient country in East Asia. It is a peninsula. It had enjoyed a long uninterrupted rule of Yi dynasty from 1392 to 1910. Korea was reduced to a colony of Japan in 1910. With the surrender of Japan in 1945 at the end of the Second World War, Korea again became independent but soon it plunged in a civil war which culminated into a full scale war with the involvement of foreign powers. The war formalised the partition of the peninsula along the 38th parallel into two states—South Korea and North Korea. Korea had been historically a developed mono-ethno lingual country. But now the people are divided into two separate states.

12.2 IMPACT OF JAPANESE RULE

Japan first reduced Korea into a protectorate in 1905 and then formally annexed it in 1910. Japanese occupation ended the 518 years old rule of Yi dynasty along with the independence of the peninsula. Japan's rule over Korea had continued for 35 years

(1910-1945). During the period Korea experienced many fundamental socio-economic changes. Old feudalistic administrative system was replaced by a colonial centralised administration. The colonial government introduced mass education, a new legal system, modernized the transport and communication systems and raised a strong police force to curb the civil liberties of the Korean people, Japan like other colonial powers, followed a development strategy to serve its own economic interests at the cost of the people of Korea. It raised a landlord class as the social base of Japanese rule and created a vast unemployed labour force who were transported to the mainland of Japan and its other colonies to man the Japanese owned mills and factories. It encouraged grain production only to export to Japan at a non-competitive protected price. Korea was also subjected to economic drain. Korean resources and wealth were transferred to Japan on different pretexts. Japan's war machinery was substantially manned and financed by Korea.

The exploitative policies and acts of Japanese rulers reacted upon Korea and soon an anti-colonial liberation movement emerged. Japanese administration in Korea faced on several occasions both peaceful and violent uprisings and demonstrations, protesting against colonial rule. The colonial administration put down such nationalist movements with a heavy hand. The emerging nationalist forces being persistently repressed found it impossible to launch any movement from within the country. The nationalists and many communists there upon took shelters in China, Russia, (then USSR) and other countries and from there they separately fought against Japanese rule. As a result there could not be organized and united national movement against Japanese rule. The Koreans, who had fought bitterly against colonial rule, however, at independence they therefore found themselves hopelessly divided. There existed sharp dissensions in the political forces on fundamental issues.

These are in short the legacies which Japan left at departure, and these legacies conditioned the future developments in the peninsula.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : i) Use the space given below each question for your answers.

ii) Check your answer with the hints given at the end of the unit.

1) Comment on the Japanese rule in Korea.

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12.3 PARTITION OF KOREA

Much before the surrender of Japan the allied powers started considering a plan for free Korea. Japan surrendered in August 1945 and Korea became independent. Immediately after Japan's surrender the nationalists came together and decided to form a government for whole of Korea. A committee, christened as the Committee for the Preparation of the National Construction of Korea, was formed. The repatriated freedom fighters and the political prisoners, released from the Japanese jails, supported the effort. The newly formed committee took over the reigns of the peninsula and within a short period brought almost whole of Korea within its jurisdiction. In this committee there were a number of communists and left democratic section of the nationalists.

Russian army crushed the Japanese resistance and entered Korea in early August 1945. The victorious Red Army after freeing whole of North Korea moved towards the Southern part of the peninsula. Meanwhile the committee, which was set up following the surrender of Japan, to reconstruct Korea, called a National Assembly,

declared the independence and established "People's Republic of Korea". The Republic claimed itself as the only legitimate political authority for whole of Korea. Russia (then the USSR) accepted the legitimacy of the Republic.

The Russian victory provoked the USA to send its troops to Korea, so that whole of the peninsula might not fall under the exclusive control of Russia. The US troops captured Southern part of the 38th parallel. The US however did not recognise the legitimacy of the Republic. It took steps to set up a separate government for the Southern part. The US army established a Military government in Korea. During the period the Military government allowed freedom of political activities. Many political parties were founded. The US Military government tried to unite the non-communist political forces. Being inspired by the US army the most conservative right wing forces came together and formed government in South Korea under the aegis of the USA. The US backed government in South Korea took number of measures to consolidate its power and position in that part of the peninsula. It tried to lure a section of nationalists and to establish an interim all-Korean government with their support. It attempted to raise a legislative assembly too. But the US backed regime failed to elicit any genuine support from among the Koreans. On the contrary the people protested against the US role in Korea and condemned the US manoeuvres as strategies to perpetuate US army occupation of Korea.

12.3.1 UN Intervention

In December 1945 the UK, the USA and the USSR signed an agreement in Moscow. The agreement envisaged a five-year trusteeship for Korea under the joint supervision of these countries and the Chiang Kai Shek's China. The Trustees were assigned the job to establish an independent and United State of Korea. The Korean nationalists opposed the trusteeship arrangements and organized anti-trusteeship demonstrations throughout Korea. The big powers however ignored the Korean opposition to their decision. A joint US-USSR commission was set up for the formation of an all Korean government in collaboration with the democratic forces of Korea. The commission met twice in 1946 and 1947 but failed to come to an agreement particularly on the issue of Korean participation in future political set up of the country. The commission then was dissolved.

After the dissolution of the commission and abortive US attempts to instal a civil government in Korea, the USA raised the Korean question in the UNO. The UN General Assembly constituted the UN temporary commission on Korea and authorized it to hold a general election in the peninsula and following the election to form a national government with the elected representatives of the people for the country. The UN decision was condemned as another US manoeuvre to perpetuate its influence in the region and was rejected by the people of North Korea and the erstwhile USSR. The commission failed to hold election in the North and decided to organize election in the South. Most of nationalists objected to organize election in one part of the country. They expressed their apprehension that such act might formalize the partition of Korea. Nationalists including a section of pro-US politicians demanded immediate independence of South Korea in 1948 and opposed the UN plan to hold election only in South Korea. Despite objection and noncooperation of a vast section of the South Korean people the UN Commission organised election in South Korea in 1948. The US backed media as usual claimed the election as a great success. A so-called elected national assembly came into existence and the assembly adopted a constitution. Dr. Syngman Rhee who by that time had returned from self imposed exile in America, was elected by the assembly to be the first President of South Korea and the Republic of Korea (ROK) was inaugurated on 15 August, 1948.

Meanwhile the communists and the democrats consolidated their position in North Korea. They institutionalised their position by founding the Supreme People's Assembly, the highest law making body, and the Central People's Committee, the chief executive wing of the government. The USSR transferred most of the powers to these institutions which soon gave the country an orderly administration. In August 1948 North Korea went to a poll to elect the 527 member Supreme People's Assembly. The new elected Assembly proclaimed on 9 September the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

12.3.2 Korean War

Since the surrender of Japan, Korea had been informally divided into two states — South and North. In course of time two types of political authorities emerged in two parts. In North the communists and the leftists backed by a fast growing well organized party, known as Korean Worker's Party, established a stable government. It also raised an army. The government immediately enacted and implemented popular land reforms. It also adopted development strategies to remove the age old backwardness of the people. The people all over Korea greeted these measures with enthusiasm. However in South the political authority was captured by the extreme rightists elements with the help of the US forces stationed in the country. The government was very repressive in South Korea. It formulated measures to suppress all popular movements and to root out the leftist elements spread over the country. Land reforms, withdrawal of the US occupation etc. were the popular demands. But the official response to these demands was not only negative but also harsh. The negative attitude of the government towards the popular demands gave birth to civil war in South Korea. This civil war in fact transformed into the Korean war between North and South Korea. While the South Korean government was supported by the US and its allies, the North got moral and material support from the communist bloc and the national liberation movements in the colonies and newly independent countries.

After the inauguration of the ROK in 1948, the UNO recognized it. The UNO, however did not recognize the DPRK. So when the war between the two halves broke out, the UN decided to support the member state, the ROK. It soon raised a multinationals military force and place the same under the command of the US military. The US commanded UN force swung into action from September 1950 against the DPRK.

Pandit Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India asked the US commanded UN force not to cross the 38th parallel. He warned that such act might provoke People's Republic of China (PRC) to intervene in favour of the DPRK and would complicate the war situation. The UN forces did not pay heed to the warning, crossed the 38th parallel and reached to the heart of the DPRK. PRC immediately intervened in October 1950 and the North-South hostilities turned into a full scale protracted war.

The war destroyed many cities, killed lakhs of Korean people and the whole of Korea was devastated. Only in South Korea there were more than 800,000 casualties. The war continued for three years and ended without any formal peace agreement between the warring sides. There was an internationally agreed armistice in 1953 and the ceasefire line was drawn roughly along the 38th parallel. This line has been the boundary of two Koreas. Along with the line a demilitarized zone (DMZ) was created. As a result of the war the partition of Korea was formalised and in the peninsula two independent states emerged. The Korean war did not solve the problem of Korean unity for which the people had been longing since the withdrawal of Japan. The war had also not solved other allied problems. On the contrary, formalizing the partition of historically developed one people and one country gave birth to many new problems which conditioned the future development in the peninsula.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space given below each question for your answers.
ii) Check your answer with the hints given at the end of the unit.

1) How did the partition of Korea formalise?

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12.4 POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN ROK (South Korea)

Republic of Korea was formed in 1948. Since then ROK has passed through many regimes and drastic changes in constitutions for several times. Each new regime proclaims itself as a new republic. In this way there have established six republics so far. The country had remained under military rule for more than two and half decades since 1948. Military established dictatorship with indirect election system. After prolonged popular movements, the democratic system has been operating since 1988. Several constitutions were promulgated and each again were drastically amended to suit the designs of the rulers of the day. ROK has failed to develop a lasting constitution acceptable to the people. The country has also been passing through fragile party system. Praetorian parties generally enjoy powers. The parties emerged through movements or founded by the civilian political forces seldom occupy the seat of power. The political succession in the ROK also remained by an large unsmooth and problematic. Despite high economic developments the socio-political unrest has been endemic. The involvement of the US and its army and other conservative forces in the internal affairs of South Korea is alleged to be the basic reason for the fragility of the political system in the ROK.

12.4.1 Constitutional Developments

First constitution of South Korea was drafted and promulgated in 1948. The constitution proclaimed the country as the Republic of Korea (ROK). It provided a presidential system of government, but the president was to be elected by the national assembly. In post Korean war period the constitution was amended several times in order to perpetuate the Liberal Party rule. In July 1952 the national assembly passed an amendment to the constitution which envisaged that President would henceforth be elected by popular vote. In 1954 several amendments were passed, to make the office of the president more powerful. The people did not support these measures. They condemned the government as dictatorial regime. Popular movement gradually became strong enough to force the incumbent president Dr. Shyngman Rhee to resign in 1960. A caretaker government took over. The National Assembly passed a constitutional amendment establishing a parliamentary system of government headed by a prime minister. With this qualitative change there emerged the Second Republic of Korea. However the Parliamentary system could not survive long because of the sharp dissensions in the political forces on the fundamental political issues and due to want of legitimacy for the incumbent prime minister, president and other ministers. They had no popular mandate behind them. Popular agitations grew in support of reunification of Korea and other socio-economic demands. The government being liberal, allowed open political activities. At this juncture the military intervened and captured power. It suspended the constitution. The military regime drafted a constitutional amendment and got it passed by a national referendum in December 1962. The amendment revived the strong presidential system of government. The regime formed a political party, held elections, wore the civilian garb and established with great fanfare the third Republic (1963-72). Since the performances of the regime failed to satisfy the people, there emerged popular movements demanding parliamentary democracy. In the context of the growing political turmoil the regime headed by Gen. Park proclaimed martial law and abrogated the constitution and dissolved all constitutional bodies including the national assembly. A new constitution was framed and got approved through a nation wide referendum in November 1972. The new constitution established a strong presidential system introduced for the first time indirect elections and constituted the National Conference for Unification (NCU) as an electoral college with 2,359 member. The NCU was responsible for electing the President, national assembly etc. The rulers called it the fourth Republic of Korea (1972-79). Because of popular protests and mass movements against military dictatorial rule the republic did not survive for more than seven years. Towards the end of 1979 an interim government headed by Choi kyu ha was formed. But the popular movement continued and took a violent turn in April-May 1980. The military again took over the administration of the state. Gen. Chun emerged as the president of the country and proclaimed the Fifth Republic in early 1981. The indirect election

and the strong presidential system continued. Popular Movements changed the entire South Korea throughout 1980's. The regime agreed now to frame a new constitution. An eight member committee, consisting of official and non official members was constituted to draft a new constitution. It drafted the constitution which was finally approved by a National referendum in October 1987 and the Sixth Republic started functioning from February 1988.

The new constitution established a presidential system of administration. The president is to be elected for a single term of five years by direct popular vote. The president is not all powerful. He has the veto powers but he can be over ruled by the National Assembly. The President shall appoint the majority party leader in the National Assembly as the Prime Minister. Military has been forbidden to participate in the politics. The Constitution has provided for direct elections in accordance with the principles of adult franchise. Executive powers are vested in the State-Council consisting of the President Prime Minister and 15 to 30 members. Legislative powers are vested with the national Assembly consisting of 200 members elected on four yearly basis according to the principles of adult franchise. There is an elaborate provision for separate and independent judiciary. Citizens are guaranteed fundamental human rights.

12.4.2 Party System

President Rhee while in power formed the first political party, known as the Liberal Party in 1952. The party had majority-support in National Assembly in 1950's. The party became unpopular on account of corruption and intra party cleavages. In 1956 and 1960 presidential elections though the party candidate for the post of president won, its candidate for the post of vice-president lost. During the 1956 presidential election, a new party known as the Democratic Party was formed. The candidate of the party for the post of vice-president won the election. It performed well in 1958 national assembly election. In 1960 also its candidate for the post of vice-president won. The party fought for establishing parliamentary system of democracy. It formed government under parliamentary system in 1960 but because of intra party squabbles it failed to remain in power. Military replaced the DP government in 1961. Military rulers after legalising political activities formed its own party, called the Democratic Republican Party. The party failed to emerge as a civilian political force supported by the masses. During the last years of the military rule minor political forces got united and formed New Democratic Party (NDP) which demanded the reestablishment of parliamentary democracy. In 1978 elections to the national assembly the NDP received about 33 p.c. of the total seats in the assembly and the DRP got only 31.7 p.c. seats. The NDP members resigned from the assembly in 1980 in protest against the repressive and autocratic rule of the military backed regime. But the party soon degenerated into a stagnant force. It was, however, revitalized under the leadership of Kim Young-San who inducted in his party many veteran opposition politicians.

As a result of the pressure created by the popular movements against the continuation of martial law, imposed in 1972, the martial law had to be withdrawn in January 1981, and the political activities were allowed. Immediately several new political parties were formed. Among the new parties the Democratic Justice Party (DJP), and the Democratic Korean Party (DKP) are noteworthy. These parties won the maximum seats in the elections to the 276 member national assembly, held in March 1981. DJP and DKP won 151 and 81 seats respectively. DJP remained in power for a couple of years. Under the liberal system of president Chun several political prisoners were released and allowed to participate in the political activities in the country during the first-half of 1980s. A group of released politicians formed the New Korean Democratic Party (NKDP) in January 1985. In the election to the National Assembly held in February 1985 the DJP retained its majority, but the NKDP emerged as the major opposition party securing 67 seats in 276 member assembly. The DKP and other parties lost in the fray and were reduced to minor political forces. NKDP however faced split in 1987 and the break away faction formed the Reunification Democratic Party (RDP). It aimed at reunification of Korea. Another break away faction headed by Kim Dae-Jung formed the Peace and Democratic Party (PDP) in November 1987. It nominated Kim Dae-Jung as its candidate for the presidential election in Dec. 1987. The party got nearly 27 p.c. of the total votes cast. The PDP emerged as the main opposition party following the general election for the national

assembly, held in April 1988. Political developments in South Korea took a dramatic turn in 1990 and the DJP, RDP and the NDRP merged together to form a new party, christened as the Democratic Liberal Party (DLP). The new party became a major force in the assembly. A section of RDP had opposed the merger and formed the Democratic Party (DP). Subsequently the PDP and other smaller groups joined DP in order to strengthen the opposition. In the election to the national assembly, held in March 1992, the DLP failed to retain its majority position in the assembly. It received 149 of a total 299 seats. The DP emerged as the main opposition winning 97 seats in the assembly. In the following months there were defections from all parties over the issue of nomination of candidates in the ensuing presidential election. The defectors joined together to form New Korean Party. In the presidential election, held in December 1992 the DLP candidate Kim Young Sam won the election. Now in South Korea, there are three prominent political parties—DLP, DP and the United People's Party.

12.4.3 Political Processes

a) The Election

First ever elections to legislative body, National Assembly in South Korea were held in 1948 under the supervision of the UN. According to UN plan elections were to be held throughout Korea. But North Korea objected to such plan of holding election under the supervision of UN. Even in South Korea there were protests against such elections. However the elections were held for a National Assembly which ultimately formed the sole legislative body and elected the president for South Korea as per the provisions of the constitution which National Assembly earlier had promulgated. The National Assembly functioned uninterruptedly till 1961 when it was dissolved by the military rulers. During the period from 1948 to 1961 there had been periodical election for the National Assembly. The Assembly was revived in 1963 and elections to it were held under the supervision of the military and the military sponsored political party, the Democratic Republic Party (DRP) won the elections. In 1972 again the National Assembly was dissolved and the elections in accordance with principle of universal franchise were done away with. Instead, an electoral college, named National Conference for Unification consisting of 2,354 members was formed. The electoral college used to elect the president and the legislature. Elections in accordance with the principles of universal franchise were restored under the new constitution promulgated in 1988.

Elections for the post of President were also held indirectly and directly for several occasions. First constitution (1948) stipulated for indirect election of the president. It was however amended in 1952 and the system of election of the president by popular vote was introduced. The military captured power in 1961 and suspended the civil liberties and the constitution. Again the system of indirect election was introduced in 1972. The military backed regimes established the National Conference for Unification as an electoral college which elected president till the abrogation of the system in late 1980s. In 1988 again the election of president by popular vote was reintroduced. Besides elections, there had been referendum on several occasions also. The military administration introduced the referendum system to get approved by the people the political system designed in the cantonments. It is difficult to accept whether the elections or referendums were always free and fair. Because every time big section of national and international media complained about the irregularities, practiced by the people in power during the elections.

b) Succession

Though the people of South Korea aspired for a parliamentary system of democracy and all necessary civil liberties, the country had to continue with the strong presidential system for many decades. Succession of the government and the head of the state was not always peaceful or in accordance with provisions of the constitution. Most of the period so far there were indirect elections and restrictions on universal franchise system were imposed time to time. In addition there were military take over on several occasions and coups and counter coups. Political assassination, arrest of top political leaders for an indefinite period, and suspension of civil rights have been almost common throughout the decades. The country suffered from direct military rule for about three decades.

Dr. Syngman Rhee was the first president of the Republic of Korea (South Korea). He was indirectly elected in 1948 by the members of the National Assembly. The system of indirect election was changed and on subsequent occasions Rhee was elected as president by the direct vote of the people. Rhee was succeeded by Chang Nyon in 1960. But the succession was not smooth. Rhee was forced to resign by the pressure of the protest movements against his regime. Nyon was also deposed in 1961 as a result of the seizure of power by the military. General Park Chung-Hee staged coup and seized the political authority of the Republic, with this began the long spell of military rule. In October 1979 Park was assassinated in an abortive coup, staged by the Korean Central Intelligence Agency chief who was subsequently executed. The Prime Minister of Park's regime, Choikyn Hah took over as the acting president. He was regularised and continued in office till 1984, when again on account of the political unrest against his rule he had to resign. General Chun Doc- Hwan who had earlier become the army chief by deposing his predecessor, became the president of South Korea. The military leaders introduced indirect elections and strengthened the presidential system of government. The people considered the successive military regimes as undemocratic, they continued the struggle for the restoration of democracy. Due to the pressure of the movement democratic system was ultimately restored in 1988 and general Chun was succeeded by an elected civilian president Roh Tac-woo, a civil political leader. South Korea thus got a civilian popularly elected president in 25 years. Roh-Toi-Woo was replaced by Kim Young San through the presidential election held in 1992.

The succession in the political parties also remained problematic because of instability and a cleavage ridden party system.

c) Political Movements

The foundation of the Republic of Korea in the Southern region in 1948 was not supported by all people of the land. Immediately there broke out a rebellion. The rebels demanded withdrawal of the US forces, unification of Korea, progressive land reforms and to fulfil the democratic aspirations of the people. The rebellion, however was brutally crushed. Though the rebellion was crushed, anti-regime feelings of the people could not be removed. During late 1950 despite repression, opposition to the government grew. The government snatched the democratic rights of the people by repealing the local autonomy laws and passing the new national security laws. In protest against the autocratic behaviour and the rampant corruption in the government violent students movement arose in 1960. The student uprising forced the Shingnam Rhee regime to resign. An interim government headed by Ho Chong took over the administration. Parliamentary system of democracy was established. The interim government though established a liberal system, failed to solve the growing socio-economic problems and to take effective steps for reunification of Korea. Again there were popular unrests and the agitations by the students in support of the reunification of the peninsula. At this juncture in May 1961 the military intervened and captured the political powers. The military regime suspended the constitution, banned all political activities and established strong presidential system of government.

In 1963 General Park took over the supreme power from General Chang. Park legalised the political activities. South Korea during the rule of Park achieved remarkable economic development. But the undemocratic rule and the predominance of army in the political field created unrest in the people. In October 1979 there were wide spread student movements. The hard core section of the regime made the liberal policies of Park responsible for the unrest. The Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) Chief killed Park. The assassination of Park plunged whole of South Korea in an unprecedented political crisis. Martial law was proclaimed and the Prime Minister of Park regime, Choi Kyn had become the head of the government. He released many political prisoners and cancelled the Emergency Decrees. The killer of Park was executed. But politico-constitutional reforms which were being demanded by the people, had not yet been enacted. As a result in mid-1980 there were wide spread unrest and vigorous student movements. They demanded the immediate end of Martial Law, promulgation of new constitution and the dismissal of the hard liner General Chun. Lakhs of students marched into the streets and there were skirmishes between the agitating people and the police. The regime in order to crush the movement adopted several repressive measures. Martial Law was extended throughout the country, leaders and activists were arrested in thousands, political activities were

banned, colleges were closed, public meetings and rallies were banned. Despite the restrictions the movement spread throughout the country, and the agitating people captured a few cities. Now in order to quell the movements the army was deployed and the administration was totally taken over by the army. General Chun emerged the real ruler of South Korea. Chun soon became the president also. However protest movements continued. The movement was further strengthened because of the growing economic crisis. Thousands of politicians were arrested and many were deprived of political rights. General Chun resigned from the active service and adopted measures to civilianize the administration. He talked about the reunification of Korea and invited North Korean leaders to visit South Korea. He also declared several measures to root out corruption from the administration. All these actions increased the popularity of Chun who now got himself elected as president for a seven year term. South Korean economy, however could not be brought out from the woods. Growing economic crisis increased the miseries of the people. In this context again the students and the working people launched agitations in the last quarter of 1981. Chun in order to calm down the temper made many rosy promises but did not take any immediate measures to ease the situation. The movement continued. In response to the growing political movements demanding full democratisation of the government and the establishment of parliamentary system, the regime implemented measures to fulfil the people's demands and from 1987 civilianization of the government was started piece by piece. The people's movements and students unrest continued in 1980 and in subsequent years in support of reunification of Korea and in support of the demand for the withdrawal of US army, stationed in South Korea.

12.4.4 Economic Development

South Korea occupies about 45 p.c. of the total land area of the Korean peninsula. It is mountainous, only 22 p.c. of the land is arable and is tilled. Nearly 66 p.c. of the total land area is marked as forest land. South Korea is richer than North Korea in rice cultivation. Climate of the country is most suitable for extensive farming. The land is endowed with both fishing and forest resources. Although there had been indiscriminate felling of trees during the last year of Japanese rule, due to the existence of potentialities the country has again developed good forest. It exports a good quantity of wood. South Korea has a vast coastline which provides opportunities for developing fisheries. The country earns good amount of foreign capital by exporting fish. In 1985 South Korea exported huge amount of fish, the cost of which was \$960m.

The country however is not endowed with much mineral and mining resources. It does not have any reserve of petroleum, but South Korea has in possession of about 50 varieties of minerals. Its industries therefore heavily depend upon imported minerals and ores including iron, copper, zinc, aluminium etc. Coal is available in South Korea but in order to meet the growing domestic demand the country goes for importing coal to keep its iron and steel industries functioning.

South Korea has opted for capitalist system of economy. The state's participation basically has remained confined to provide infrastructural support to the private enterprises. The government has developed an institution of planning, framed financial policies and instruments of regulating market and to guide the socio-cultural issues which have direct bearing upon the economic development of the country.

The basic thrust in the economic development of South Korea has been maximization of income through export. It has made the economic development in the country export oriented and dependent upon the market behaviour of the other countries. The policy of export led growth was initiated in 1962 and since then the ROK has been following the same policy. Earlier the ROK had been pursuing the policy of import-substitution, the emergence of a well qualified work force and the availability of cheap labour have helped the implementation of the policy of the outward orientation of the economy. However the strategy has made the economy of the land largely dependent upon the developed capitalist country. South Korea is not endowed with much resources and raw material, required for a high economy. So it had to go for large scale import of raw materials, to keep its factories and workshops running. The reliance upon the import of raw materials has further made the economy dependent upon others.

During the early years, the country suffered from severe economic crisis, partly due to the damages and destructions during the three year old Korean War and largely owing to the conservative policies of Dr. Rhee's government. The rate of inflation was very high and the growth rate declined to zero level. The new policy formulated after the military takeover paid good dividends. The growth rate for the period from 1963 to 1983 was nearly 8.4 p.c. per annum. However the new policy has been an outward orientation, the growth rate fails to become stable. The rate soon declined to 5.4 p.c. again of course it rose as high as 12.5 p.c. in 1986. Again the crisis has started brewing since 1990. The economic growth rate fell from 8.4 p.c. in 1989 to 5 p.c. in 1992. The industrial production fell in 1993 and it is feared that the country may in near future be thrown into full-blown recession. Another weakness of the South Korean economy is that the policy has created a wide gap in the income levels. The average Korean in general and the rural people in particular suffer from inequality of income. They get very low wages. There has also been unemployment problem, more than 2.6 p.c. of the total work force of 17.5 million as per the estimate of 1989, is unemployed. The frequent popular movements and the stirrings among the working people bear the testimony that the economic policies pursued by successive governments have failed to develop an egalitarian democratic society.

Check Your Progress 3

- Note :
- Use the space provided below each question for your answer.
 - Check your answer with the hints given at end of the unit.

- 1) Point out the basic features in the political development of the ROK.

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- 2) Critically examine the economic policy of ROK.

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12.5 POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN DPRK (NORTH KOREA)

The political system as developed in the DPRK by contrast with the ROK's political System is more stable. The country was ruled till 1972 according to the provisions of a constitution, framed in 1948. In 1972 a new constitution was framed and the same has been continuing with certain consequential changes. The DPRK though has been wedded to one party system, the party has organizational network spread over the country. Though in the top leadership Kim Il Sung has still been continuing since the beginning, there have been periodical changes of leadership in the middle order and other ranks of the state. Elections are periodically held. But in the DPRK there has been little scope for open politics. Dissensions are generally not permitted. For all these reasons the critics often call the DPRK a totalitarian state.

12.5.1 Constitutional Developments

The constitutional developments in North Korea was initiated in 1947 when a

legislative body, the Supreme People's Assembly was established. The election for the Assembly was first held in 1948. The newly elected Supreme People's Assembly declared North Korea as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The rudimentary constitution which was introduced in 1947-48 continued to provide administrative infrastructures of North Korea till 1972, when a new constitution was framed and proclaimed. The constitution was framed to adapt it to the changes that had taken place since 1947. The same constitution has been in vogue with consequential changes. In 1992 there had been some important amendments to the constitution to adapt it into the postcold war international situation. The amendments were enacted to give the country a new ideological orientation and promote economic openness. The principle of self-reliance has been added as a guiding principle to the state. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is an independent socialist state. The sovereignty of state rest on the working people. They exercise the power through their chosen representatives. The citizens are guaranteed with basic human rights. Right to work is one of the fundamental rights.

The head of the state is the President. The President is the effective executive head. He has many powers but he is responsible to the Supreme People's Assembly. The Supreme People's Assembly is the highest law making body. It elects the President for a four year term in accordance with the principles of universal franchise through secret ballot. The number of members is flexible. At present there are 687 members in the Assembly. Next important institution is the Central People's Committee. It consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary and members chosen by the Supreme People's Assembly. It is an executive council of the Assembly and supervises the functions of all other organs of the state. It appoints the prime minister, vice-president and other ministers, executes the legislations passed by the Assembly. It functions as the chief organ of the state during the intervening period of two sessions of the Assembly. There is provision for a council of ministers, which is known as the Administrative Council. It functions under the supervision of the Central People's Committee. There is provision for autonomous local self governments. They are known as the People's Assemblies. There is also the provision for independent judiciary headed by the Central Court. There are local courts, the people's courts and the special courts. Judges are elected by the Supreme People's Assembly. The judiciary protects the people and the different state organs from arbitrary actions. The state bears the expenses of all judicial activities including that of the ordinary citizens.

12.5.2 Party System

In North Korea there are several active political parties and pressure groups. Many of them are legal organizations. But the functioning of the system shows that there has been in DPRK single party system. The members of the Assembly are elected unopposed. The political dissent is not generally tolerated. Though there has been the provision for democratic centralism, the principle has been in course of time eroded as a result of continuation in power by a single person for such a long period. The opposition movements are crushed by force. As a result the dissident political forces function both from underground and from foreign lands and the news of abortive coups are frequently heard. Besides there has been periodical purging of members from the ruling party.

The political parties in Korea owe their origin to the anti imperialist movements against Japanese colonialism. The anti imperialist movement started emerging almost with the beginning of Japanese rule in Korea in 1910. Several parties were formed to launch the freedom movement in the early 1920's. Communist Party of Korea was also founded during the same time. Since the Japanese rule was brutal and most repressive, Korean political activists had to take shelters in foreign lands. Most of the communists, however remained in the country and continued the struggle from underground. At the withdrawal of Japan from Korea, the communists first formed the independent government. Subsequently the communists in cooperation with other political activists who now returned from exile, formed the North Korean Workers Party. In 1948 the leftists from Southern region joined the North Korean Workers Party to form the Korean Worker's Party. The KWP has been ruling the DPRK since its inception and Kim Il Sung has been holding the supreme position since 1946. The party has rebuilt North Korea after the devastating Korean war. The party is a

monolithic political organization, believes in Marxism-Leninism. It has elaborate organizational structure. There is little difference between the party and the governmental infrastructure. Among other political parties mention can be made of the Chondoist Chonga Party and the Social Democratic Party. They are very old parties but now almost ceased of independent functioning. They in alliance with the KWP formed in 1946 the democratic front for the reunification of the fatherland. The front since then has been propagating the idea of reunification of Korea. The dissident political forces formed in 1990 the Salvation Front which wants to establish multi-party democratic system and unification of Korea through democratic means. In North Korea the trade union movements are permitted, but the movement can be launched under the banner of ruling party's frontal organizations. Multiplicity of pressure groups are not permitted.

12.5.3 Political Processes

In North Korea elections for the Supreme People's Assembly and for the post of President are held periodically and smoothly as per the provisions of the constitution. First elections were held in 1947 and there have been elections periodically since then. In the elections for Supreme People's Assembly the members were elected unopposed. The citizens who are 17 years old and above have the right to vote.

Succession to the post of President, the highest executive head of the state, have remained so far smooth and as per the provisions of the constitution. Kim Il Sung is being elected periodically as the president and the Chief executive head of the country. Successions to the other important posts however are not smooth. Due to purging of members from the KWP there have been regular changes of persons in other important posts like the Vice-President, Premier etc. Though opposition political activities are not permitted, the KWP maintains links with the people and mobilized them to elicit public support to its socio-political programmes. The people are also mobilized on international political issues. The US presence in South Korea is projected as a threat to the DPRK. The people are organized against such threat. They are also mobilized occasionally in support of the demand for reunification of Korea. Opposition political activities also continue. Their underground activities at times create pressure on the ruling party also. As a result the KWP recently has adopted measures to open the country and to liberalise the political system. It had opted for the conservative Marxist-Leninist principles. It now talks about Korean nationalism, self-reliance etc. which are collectively called in Korean as the principles of 'Juche'.

12.5.4 Economic Development

In North Korea plain lands are limited to 20 per cent of the total land area. The country is not endowed with rich agricultural resources. In the southern and northern parts of the state cropping seasons last for four and two months respectively. The DPRK however has increased the area of arable land through afforestation, water conservation and the programme for reclamation. North Korea is relatively richer than South Korea in mining and mineral resources. Coal, iron ore, lead, zinc, tungsten and fluoride are available in good quantity. The country does not have mineral oil resources.

Though the climate is favourable for the growth of forest, better quality-trees are not available in good quantity. North Korea has both marine and sweetwater fish resources. While water conservation provides opportunities for on-shore fishing, Japan sea and yellow sea offer great facilities for deep sea fishing.

Nearly 55 per cent of the total area of the peninsula falls within jurisdiction of DPRK. Total land area is 120, 538 sq.km. The country is not densely populated. In fact it suffers from shortage of man power.

North Korea has opted for a highly centralized and planned economic development strategy. The control of the state on the economy has been almost total. There is a nominal private sector. From departmental store to big industries, all sectors of the economy fall within the state sector. The goal set by the political authority of the DPRK is of achieving self-sufficiency. The economy has been developed with an inward orientation. However from the middle of 1980's the government has started

opening the country for the foreign investors. Joint ventures with foreign companies are being encouraged. The DPRK has embarked upon large scale modernization programmes. It has been seeking help from the West to make them successful.

The DPRK opted for planned development. Immediately after the Korean war, it formulated a 3 year reconstruction plan, then it framed a 5 year plan. After the 5 year plan it started framing seven year plans. Now the country has been under the third 7 year plan (1987-93). Achievement of self-reliance in all fields remains the basic thrust of the planning. Immediately after forming the government in 1946 the ruling party embarked upon enacting land reforms with a view to distributing land to tillers. Initially the private farming was encouraged. After the conclusion of the Korean war collective farming was introduced. By the end of 1958, private farming was totally abolished. Now the farming is conducted either by the cooperatives or by the state farms.

The DPRK achieved a tremendous success in the 1950's. First two plans were fully implemented and the targets were achieved well in advance. But there were problems during the third plan. The plan period was extended up to ten years instead of seven years. The first plan (i.e. 3 year plan) completed the reconstruction of North Korean economy which had suffered heavily during the three year long war (1950-53). The second plan was devoted to lay firm foundations for industries and scientific developments. The third plan set the industries into motion. Subsequent plans stressed upon the development of new technologies, achieving the self-sufficiency in new technologies, achieving the self-sufficiency in industrial products, the creation of new energy sources, improvement of quality of products, restoration of regional balances and modernization.

Korean economy was kept by the Japanese ruler dependent upon land lord dominated agriculture. The DPRK government within a decade or so transformed the agriculture dominated economy into a highly developed industrialized, economy. Now industry contributes about 80 per cent of the GDP to the country. Agriculture has been mechanised, and production has been increased many folds as compared to the situation in early 1950's. Since the country is not very rich in agricultural resources, the DPRK has developed wide heavy industries which now produce steel, iron, non-ferrous metals, machinery and equipment, fertilizers, plastics, and cement. The country has also encouraged medium, light and small scale industries which mainly produce consumer articles. Since petroleum is not available in Korea, the DPRK placed added emphasis on the development of hydroelectric power generation and coal mines. It also has developed the mining sector with sophisticated technology. The DPRK has claimed that by the middle of 1980's it achieved an average 8.8 p.c. annual growth rate in National Material product and 12.2 p.c. in industrial output. The current plan sets the target of achieving annual growth of 8 p.c. in GNP.

North Korea though has been successful in raising an independent industrial base and laid the strong foundation of self-reliant economy and the economy is comparatively less dependent upon foreign assistance, the country faces at times economic crisis. In 1990 the DPRK experienced many setbacks. In order to overcome the setbacks it partially opened the economy. Now foreign investment in joint ventures are encouraged. North Korea in fact is now trying hard to persuade the foreign investors. It has also diversified its international trade. Now the country is encouraging trade with Western countries, Japan and many third world countries.

Check Your Progress 4

- Note :** i) Use the space given below each question to give your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the hints given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Write an essay on the party system in the DPRK.

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- 2) Analyse the economic development strategy in the DPRK.

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12.6 LET US SUM UP

Korea had been one country. It has been partitioned due to the machinations of the foreign powers. The people have not yet wholly accepted the partition, demand for reunification has still remained fundamental issue in the Korean politics.

ROK has achieved tremendous economic growth, but it is dependent development. Moreover the kind of development which ROK has achieved, has increased inequalities in the society, widened the rich-poor and the rural-urban gaps. Consequently the country faces periodically socio-political unrest.

The DPRK has achieved a stable political system and also has developed comparatively self-reliant economy and the base of socialist system. But high ideals of socialist democracy have remained missing, as a result the state structure appears to the people as totalitarian.

12.7 KEY WORDS

Peninsula : It is an area of land which is almost surrounded by water.

12.8 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

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12.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Japanese rule was colonial, repressive and exploitative.
- 2) Japan introduced centralized administration expanded socio-economic infrastructures.
- 3) Japan used Korean people and material to augment Japan's imperialist interests.
- 4) Japan did not allow any kind of political activity in Korea.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Due to the occupation of South Korea by the US army and North Korea by the USSR the dividing line between North and South was drawn. The Korean war formalised the partition.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1)
 - 1) Frequent promulgation of new constitutions, drastic amendments to the constitutions and abrogation of constitutions.
 - 2) Fragile party system.
 - 3) Frequent referendums.
 - 4) Military's participation in politics.
 - 5) Political succession was not smooth
 - 6) Controversial elections.
 - 7) Persistent political unrest
 - 8) Reunification has been the cry of the people.
- 2)
 - 1) Capitalist system of economy.
 - 2) Outward and export oriented economy.
 - 3) Reliance on import of raw materials.
 - 4) High rate of growth.
 - 5) Inequalities, rich-poor and rural-urban gaps increased.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1)
 - 1) Single party system
 - 2) There is no constitutional ban on forming political parties but dissident activities are not permitted.
 - 3) The ruling party Korean Worker's Party follows creative Marxism.
- 2)
 - 1) State controlled economy.
 - 2) Centralized planning system.
 - 3) Private ownership is not encouraged.
 - 4) Main goal is to achieve self reliance.
 - 5) Dominance of heavy and basic industries.
 - 6) Collective, State and cooperative farming have taken over the whole agriculture.