

THE ROLE OF REGIONAL PARTIES IN INDIAN DEMOCRACY

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Abstract:

A significant element of the Indian political system is the presence of a large number of regional parties. They have grown to play an important part in Indian politics at all levels, including municipal, state, and national. This article will provide a detailed examination of the function of regional parties in Indian politics. That being said, before we dig into this topic in depth, it is critical to understand the characteristics, classification, and causes that contribute to the emergence of regional parties in India. A Regional Party is a political party whose operations are restricted to a single or a few states. Regional Parties' roles centre mostly on regional issues and better administration in that region. Regional parties can even raise people's political awareness. The involvement of regional and state parties in Indian politics at the national level is at the centre of this study in the framework of the research problem. The study also investigates the role of regional and state parties in the formation and dissolution of union administrations. The increased negotiating power within these alliances/coalitions is undoubtedly having an impact on the national politics of the pan-India parties. The guiding direction of this article is to determine to what degree and in what way their role is having an impact on national politics.

Key words:

Regional parties, Democracy, Government, Evolution, Political, States, Opposition, Alliance, Republic, Minority.

Introduction

Political parties are essential to the operation of Indian democracy. Democratic systems cannot function without political parties. They serve as a link between the state and the people. Political parties compete in elections with the goal of gaining political power. In a representative democracy, they serve as a conduit between the people and the government. If a political party is unable to create a government, it becomes the opposition. The opposition party's role is to reveal the ruling party's flaws in order to strengthen democratic processes. Most democratic countries in the modern era have embraced "representative democratic forms of government," in which political parties play an essential role and serve as a "link between electors and elected." In comparison to other countries, India's democracy might be considered successful; despite the emergency traumatized the democratic system, it was only temporary, and the democratic system remained intact. Following independence, 17 Parliamentary elections and numerous Assembly elections were held successfully, and political parties in India played an important and pivotal role in this process. Political parties are the most important component of modern democratic administration, yet their function, organisation, and size vary greatly. A country's party system is determined by a variety of elements, including its political system and whether it is federal or parliamentary. The Indian party system has been formed by its specific political and social characteristics. Following independence, an elected representative parliament was established at the union level, as were legislative assemblies in India's states. The goal of establishing a parliamentary form of government was to develop an accountable administration because the executive is continually observed and controlled by the opposition in this type of government. The research of the parliamentary system's history revealed that it played a key impact in shaping the Indian party system. With the end of single-party supremacy and the advent of the coalition era, political party fragmentation occurred more rapidly, resulting in the country's multi-party system.

Literature Review

Transforming India: Social and Political Dynamics of Democracy, by Rajeev Bhargava, Balveer Arora Francine R. Frankel, and Zoya Hasan, New Delhi, 2000: This is required reading for everyone interested in the democratic process and its varied components in India. It reflects the understanding and experience of India's democratic functioning during the last fifty years and evaluates the profound developments brought about by the democratic style of governance. This book's several chapters address the roles of various constitutional and non-constitutional institutions such as the court, political parties, federalism, the electronic media, and the police. The chapters explaining the electoral rising of historically marginalised groups, fragmentation of political parties, and regionalization trends are the most important sections of this book in terms of this thesis. This book has helped me grasp the country's democratic process.

India's political Parties edited by Peter Ronald DeSouza, E. Sridharan. (Sage Publications India Pvt. Limited, New Delhi, 2006.): This book covers a wide range of topics and issues in Indian politics in general, with a specific emphasis on the party system. This book depicts the Indian party system as a multifaceted organisation that interacts with one another as they vie for power at both the central and state levels in the federal political system, which is comprised of distinct state and national party systems. The writers have compiled foundational works, scholarships on national and regional parties, and detailed reflections on key aspects of parties and the party system. The book provides a wealth of information about the history and ideologies that have influenced these numerous political parties, ranging from the Congress to the Shiv Sena.

Party Competition in Indian States: Electoral Politics in Post-Congress Polity edited by Suhas Palshikar, K.C. Suri, Yogendra Yadav. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014): The book examines the electoral outcomes in twenty-four states from 2008 to 2013, revealing the various undercurrents of India's democracy and electoral politics. Different chapters of this volume primarily balance the general analysis and provide a great source for anyone interested in a deeper understanding of the state's political movements throughout the period studied. Political watchers and experts conclude that the outcome demonstrated a significant countrywide shift in political preferences in favour of national parties over regional political groups.

Evolution of Regional Parties in India

We've all heard the phrase "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." Democracy is divided into two types: 'direct democracy' and 'indirect or representative democracy.' Citizens in a direct democracy have the right to participate directly in decision-making without the intervention of any elected or appointed official, but such a system can only be implemented with a small number of citizens and is not feasible in countries with a large population and a large territory. Indirect or representational democracy occurs when people elect representatives to create government legislation on their behalf. Regional parties have grown in number and strength during the previous four decades. This has increased the political diversity of India's Parliament. Regional political parties have emerged to address regional concerns. No single national party can gain a majority in the Lok Sabha on its own. As a result, national parties must create partnerships with state parties. Since 1989, regional political parties have played an important role in coalition politics. Our party structure has been federalized as a result of regional political parties. Through accommodation, the Centre has begun to address their difficulties and react to their aspirations. Our expanding party structure has increased the cooperation tendencies of our federal government.

Characteristics of Regional Parties in India

An Indian Regional Party has the following characteristics:

It typically works inside a single state or region. Its electoral base is constrained to a particular territory. It expresses regional interests and identifies with a specific cultural, religious, linguistic, or ethnic community.

It is largely focused with exploitation of local dissatisfaction resources or the preservation of a range of primordial demands based on language, caste, group, or location.

It focuses on local or regional issues and aspires to state-level political dominance. It has no desire to expand or dominate the federal government.

It has a political objective for increased regional autonomy for Indian Union states.

In India, regional parties are classified.

The numerous regional parties in India can be divided into the following categories:

▶ Regional parties founded on regional culture and ethnicity. Shiromani Akali Dal, National Conference, DMK, AIADMK, Telugu Desam, Shiv Sena, Asom Gana Parishad, Mizo National Front, Jharkhand Mukti Morch, and other parties are among them.

▶ Regional parties with an all-India agenda but no national electoral base. Examples include the Indian National Lok Dal, the All-India Forward Bloc, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Samajwadi Party, and the National Congress Party.

▶ Regional parties arose as a result of a split in national parties. For example, the Bangla Congress, the Telangana Praja Samithi, the Trinamool Congress, and the YSR Congress.

▶ Individual leaders who have founded regional parties based on their charismatic personalities. These are known as customised parties, and they are usually brief. Lok Janshakti Party, Haryana Vikas Party, Himachal Vikas Congress, and others are examples.

Factors responsible for the establishment of Regional Parties in India

The rise of regional parties in India can be traced to a variety of factors. Here are a few examples:

Indian society's cultural and ethnic diversity.

Developmental gaps and regional imbalances

Due to historical circumstances, certain sections of the population wish to maintain their separate identities.

The deposed's self-interest Maharajas and enslaved Zamindars

National politics' failure to match regional goals

Reorganisation of states based on language Charismatic personalities of regional leaders

Fights between factions inside larger parties

The congress party's tendency to centralise

There is no substantial opposition party at the national level.

The role of caste and religion in politics

Tribal groups are alienated and dissatisfied.

The role of Indian Regional Parties in Politics

At the regional level, they provide better governance and a stable government.

They represent a threat to the country's one-party dominating system, resulting in a reduction in the one party's supremacy.

They have a significant impact on the nature and trajectory of center-state interactions. The areas of stress in center-state relations, as well as the demand for greater autonomy, make the central leadership more attentive to the requirements of regional players.

They make politics more competitive and broaden popular participation in the political process at the grassroots level.

They broaden voters' options in both parliamentary and assembly elections. Voters can support a party that promotes the interests of the state/region.

They raise people's political awareness as well as their interest in politics. They bring to light local or regional concerns that immediately pique the public's interest.

They offer an alternative to the central government's totalitarian tendencies. They oppose the ruling party in the centre on specific issues, forcing the dominant party to be more reasonable in its approach to conflict resolution.

They offer an important contribution to the smooth operation of parliamentary democracy. In a parliamentary democracy, the minority must have a say while the majority must have its way, and regional parties have successfully served this role by being ruling parties in some states and opposition parties in others.

They were successful in revealing the Governors' partisan role in the appointment and removal of the Chief Minister, the issuance of ordinances, and the reserve of measures for consideration by the President.

Regional parties have played an important role in national politics since the advent of the coalition period. They rejoined the center-right coalition governments and shared power with the national parties.

Since independence, the Indian political system has seen significant changes in its party system. From the 'one party dominant' system to the unstable coalition period, increasing levels of political party fragmentation, and then 'bipolarization' of regional political parties, which cleared the path for effective coalition governments at the centre. The creation and growth of regional and state-based parties is not only closely related to but also responsible for these changes. Though the rise of regional parties at the state level has been present since the beginning, it has been obscured by the congress predominance.

Regional political parties are gaining power in India's federal system.

It was discovered that, due to the influence of regional political parties throughout India, national political parties were unable to maintain their centralization policy and failed to form a government at the centre with a single majority. Regionalization politics will now progressively pave the way for coalition politics. Since 1967, India has been ruled by a multiparty system in the form of a coalition in various states, eventually occupying the position in the national matrix in 1977. The ethno-regional variety, as well as the legitimacy dilemma, drove the leadership to form a coalition government with the assistance of numerous regional political parties, each representing their own region by articulating their own demesnes and goals. Coalition politics gradually became an unavoidable political reality in the country's political debates. The politics of imposition gave way to the politics of negotiating. In a coalition government, where the administration was run and decisions were made under the necessity of the coalition, the power sharing equation may rest on the strategy of negotiation between the linked political parties, which frequently attempted to adopt the "politics of cohabitation" on the other side. As a result, several political parties with distinct identities were represented on a same political platform. Ethnicity may instill the values of various groups in Indian society to coexist in a political discourse by practicing political adjustment in particular. If we examine our country's coalition arena, we can see that from 1977 to the present, eleven federal coalition governments have been performed at the Centre. The final one is the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance in 2019. It was discovered that the post-1967 period had already prepared the groundwork for Opposition Unity against the Congress Government in various states such as Kerala, West Bengal, Orissa, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu, where opposition parties emerged as "Parties of Pressure." Rajni Kothar,¹ "The Congress System in India," *Asian Survey*, 1964, 1162, referenced in Subhendu Ranjan Raj, Manak, 2009², "Coalition Politics in India, Dimensions of Federal Power Sharing." The opposition parties that formed the non-congress governments in states after the 1967 elections included the SamayuktaVidhayak Dal in Bihar, formed by the SSP, PSP, Jana Sangh, CPI, and the Jan Kranti Dal;

¹ Politics in India. By Rajni Kothari · 1970

² Coalition Politics In India: Dimensions Of Federal Power Sharing. by *Subhendu Ranjan Raj* | 1 January 2009

the United Front government in Punjab formed by the CPM, Ad(S) AD(M), CPI, Jana Sangh, and Republic Party; the Swatantra Party along with the Jana Congress formed the government in Orissa; Furthermore, the Congress split in 1969 paved the way for coalition administration at the centre in 1977, as an emerging tool of power sharing as well as a power breaker of Congress hegemony in the country in general. The Congress won 154 seats in the general election of 1977, but the Janata Party, which was established by the Congress, Bharatiya Lok Dal, Socialist Party, and Jana Sangh, won 298 seats and created India's first non-congress administration at the centre (Shubhendu Ranjan Raj 2009). As a result, the people of India have welcomed the Janata Coalition as a more democratic choice in order to restore constitutional democracy from the understand of a strong authoritarian Congress dictatorship in 1977. In the minds of general masses, the expectation was built that it will perform better than before. However, the Janata coalition ultimately failed to demonstrate their honesty. The coalition confrontation quickly emerged as a result of the largest coalition. This proved difficult to hold and maintain authority throughout the country. Gradually, the Janata government was perceived as less accommodating to the many political groups with differing ideologies. As a result of internal democracy, the Janata government has proven to be less skilled than the Congress government. However, if we take it as a fresh begging problem, the issue of power concentration has been reestablished as a quandary. On the topic of parties in power vs. parties in opposition, the confrontation between the centre and the state remains the same. The Janata Government's structural problems eventually weakened its support base, and the Congress capitalised on its disadvantage, resulting in the Congress's triumph in 1980. However, the political context of multipartism removed Indira's excessive centralization. As a result, the general election of 1989 became a watershed moment in the Indian political process for the Coalition government dynasty. It was discovered that, motivated by the previous structural difficulties of the coalition government, the coalition government of 1989 began their voyage with the spirit of cohabitation. The partnership was formed by honouring the individual identities of many regional political parties in a common proclamation based on "seat adjustments." (Sridharan2003)³ But, once again, UF's affiliated partners were unable to cohabit and rise above their ideological inconsistencies. As a result, they lost BJP backing as well. In 1990, a minority coalition government was formed with the 150 outside backing of Congress, led by Chandra Shekhar. The Congress minority government continued to function in 1991 under the leadership of P.V. Narashima Rao. H.D. Deve Gowda and I. K. Gujral founded the United Front minority government in 1996 with the support of its affiliated CPM, CPI, RSP, Forward block, Samajwadi Party Janata Dal, RJD, DMK, and Tamil Manila Congress, as well as the outside support of Congress. The first BJP minority government was formed in 1988, with the assistance of the TDP, TMC, and others, and was led by A.B. Vajpyee. Under the leadership of A.B. Vajayee, the Second BJP minority government began its function in 1999 as the National Democratic Alliance, comprising Shiv Sena, DMK, BJD, INLD, PMK, Akali Dal, Janata Dal-United, HVC, TMC, and outside assistance from TDP completed its five years term. It was noticed that during this period, the NDA government was based on the premise of well-organized cohabitation policy, as well as creating an environment of cooperative federalism. In 2004, the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance was formed, which also proved to be a well-organized coalition, govt. formed by DMK, NCP, TMC, NC, JMM, AIMM, Kerala Congress, SDF, Kerala Congress (Mani), Republic Party of India (Athvale), and four left parties. The UPA government resumed its voyage in 2009 with associated partners such as the DMK, NCP, NC, JMM, Indian Union Muslim League, Kerala Congress (Mani), All India Majlis-eIttehadulmuslimeen, viduthalai, chiruthaigal katchi, and the Republic Party of India (Athvale). (SubhenduRanjan Raj, 2009). In 2014, the BJP-led NDA government was re-elected with a single-member majority. Shiv Sena AIADMK, Shiromen Akali Dal, All Indian N.R. Congress, Naga People's Front, Lok Janashakti Party, Rasthriya Lok Samta Party, Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam, Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, All

³ K Sridharan · 2003 · (2003). Federalism and foreign relations: the nascent role of the Indian states. Asian Studies Review: Vol. 27,

Gorkhaland Students Union, National People's Party, Mizo National Front, and Pattalimakkal Katachi were the allied partners. It has also been observed that the TDP withdrew from the NDA in 2018 due to the unwillingness to award the "Special Autonomy Status" (www.outlookindia.com) despite the fact that the NDA resumed their journey as a coalition government in 2014. However, the BJP's total majority has restored its nature as a dominant and dominating force in the Indian political process. This distinguished it from the previous NDA government in 1998.

Conclusion

Regional, cultural, and developmental themes are more prominent in the regional parties' programmes and mobilisation strategies. This has developed throughout time as the dynamics of regionalism and regional issues in India have changed. To realise the fundamental aim of a regional party, regional parties must strive towards regional development rather than isolating people on regional problems. The article explained about four sets of national political parties and six regional parties. The Congress (I), the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Communist Parties, and the Bahujan Samaj Party are the national parties. This category discusses regional parties such as the DMK and AIADMK, the SAD, the NC, the TDP, the AGP, and the Jharkhand Party. The Congress (I) has a social basis that is mostly made up of high castes, minorities, and Scheduled Castes and is dedicated to the ideas of socialism, secularism, and democracy. There has recently been a shift in its social base. The BJP, the ideological successor of the Bharatiya Janata Sangh, is committed to five ideals - nationalism. Moreover, national integration, democracy, positive secularism, Gandhian Socialism, and value-based politics are all advocated. The communist parties advocate the building of a socialist society based on Marxist and Leninist revolutionary ideals. This is conceivable if the working class seizes political power. The socioeconomic basis of communist parties are mostly comprised of the working class, middle classes, and poor peasants and agricultural laborers. The BSP believes in uplifting the majority segment of society, known as the Bahujan Samaj, which includes dalits, OBCs, and minorities. Regional, cultural, and developmental considerations play a larger role in the regional parties' programmes and mobilisation techniques.

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