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What is Party system? How do you define it?

Party system depends upon no. of parties having systemic relevance & not simply on numbers. Ex: Party system in India till 4th General Elections was known as 1 party dominant system & Indian political system was known as Congress System. Since 1989, we see emergence of multiparty system & beginning of coalition politics at centre.

Party System
Parties in Western countries

In western countries we find 2ⁿ ideal types.

— Anglo-American

Their party system is called as

2 party system

— Continental Europe

Multiparty system & coalition politics.

In context of Western Party system, Duverger has given his law which shows the relationship betⁿ electoral sys & party system. According to Duverger's Law, 2 party system emerges where electoral system is simple majoritarian type & multiparty system where proportional representation is adopted. Duverger's law is relevant for western countries / democracies.

India is an exception to Duverger's law.

— Duverger has classified parties in the West into 4 types on the basis of their organisational structure

- Branch parties

He puts Liberal parties under this. (INC)

- Cell

The term cell is associated with communist parties.

- Cadre based party

Less democratic, more centralised & emphasis is on discipline (Rightist parties; BJP)

- Militia

Some parties also have their armed wings.

ex. Fascist Party of Mussolini,

Robert Michells

Regarding ~~politic~~ political parties, he gave Iron Law of oligarchy.

Max Weber

Political parties are power-houses.

Joseph La Palombara

He gave the classification of parties into 2 types

- Hegemonic Parties

Mostly found in third world.

like Communist Party of China,

INC upto 1967, African National Congress of South Africa

- ~~Turn~~ Turnover Parties

It means competitive party system.

Turnover parties are of 2 types

- A Turnover Ideological

- A Turnover Pragmatic

Turnover Ideological
- British parties

ideological difference

Turnover Pragmatic
- USA

Parties do not have much
ideological difference

Socialist Parties

Lenin describes the nature of Socialist Parties.

They claim these parties are mass parties.

Socialist parties are organised on the principle of democratic centralism, whereas for elitist scholars, socialist parties are also Oligarchies.

From elitist perspective there is not much difference in communist parties & fascist parties.

Observations on party system found in
Non-Western societies

Scenario in third world countries is quite confusing because of enormous variations & diversities. There are many forms of political system like dictatorship, monarchies, communist countries, liberal democracies exist. However in general 3rd world countries reflect hegemonic system & do not reflect competitive party system.

Most of the countries have 1 party dominant system. India is an exception where competitive multiparty system has come into existence.

In general, parties in 3rd world lack transparency,

not organised on democratic principles, Parties not always organised on secular agenda.

There may be religion based parties or parties based on ethnic identities like language, tribe, etc. , dynasty rule is very common (especially in South Asia).

Pressure Groups

Pressure Groups can also be called as Interest Groups. Gabriel Almond has given types of pressure groups

- Institutional Pressure groups
- Associational
- Communal
- Anomypic

Institutional Pressure Groups

Institutional Pressure Groups are groups of persons which are part of govt. Normally pressure groups representing members of military & permanent civil service come under this category. Institutional Pressure Groups have an edge over other Pressure Groups because they are part of the system & can directly influence policy making in their favour. Theoretically it is believed that they are more powerful in third world countries than in advanced countries.

Associational Pressure Groups

They are purely formed on the basis of interest. Ex: Interest groups of farmers, corporate class, students, teachers, doctors, etc.

Associational Pressure Groups are more common & effective in Western Democracies. They have strongest role in USA.

Communal Pressure Groups (PG)

Community based membership.

Ex: Pressure Groups based on caste, religion, language, ethnicity. They can be considered as extended kinship groups. They are exclusive in nature.

Communal PGs are more common in 3rd world countries or prismatic societies. Ex: Gurjar mahasabha.

Anomic Pressure Groups

Anomic Pressure Group is a collective behaviour. Certain collective actions for particular interest can't which can't be classified on the above 3 parameters are put under the category of anomic groups. They are short term in nature.

Ex: Collective behaviour in the form of dharna, protest comes under this category. It is very common in 3rd world.

democratic institutions not properly institutionalised.

low level of awareness

The reason a democracy is not well-institutionalised in these countries. People are not aware of institutional processes & mechanisms available.

This results into street politics.

Pressure Groups have also been classified on following grounds

- Communal Pressure Groups
- Associational Pressure Groups

It is held that all countries move from Communal PGs to politics towards Association PGs as democracy matures & hence Almonds classification is more static in nature & less realistic. Associational PGs can further be classified into 2 types

- Protective Groups
- Developmental Groups

Protective PGs are those which aim at protection of interest of their members like Bhartiya Kisan Union.

Whereas Developmental PGs have broader agenda. They take up issues like Human Rights, sustainable development, peace, disarmament, etc.

Social Movements

Social movements are also collective behaviour. Social movement can get converted into Pressure Group, pressure group can get converted into political party.

Social Movements has a long history in East as well as in West. However it is customary to treat rise of social movement with the rise of left movement in the west. Social movement in west are classified as Old and New.

Old Social Movement

Where leftist movements. Political objective was materialistic gains for working classes.

Class composition was homogenous, coming from the working classes.

- Methods: Methods were Direct actions, strikes & often violent protest also.

- Impact of Old Social movement:

They have significantly influenced public policy & resulted into extension of adult franchise & welfare state.

New Social Movements

Originated in 1960s. New Social movements are for developmental issues like protection of enviro, HR, global peace, etc. They are the movements of middle class. Their orientation is post-materialistic. They are concerned with Quality of life.

Medium of expression: Primarily they go for literary & cultural expression.

IAC, Satyam
Jyoti

Social movement in

In third world countries

Present Social Movement politics in 3rd world

represents the combination of old & new

Social Movements. Even environmental movements are not entirely new social movements.

Ex. Chipko movement in India, which is considered as the beginning of environmental movement in India was not simply for protection of environment. It was not a middle class movement. It was concerned with livelihood issues of the people & started by the rural women of Uttarakhand