

### 10. Party System

#### [Q] Changing social and economic profile of legislature

Parliament is a mirror of society. According to Edmund Burke Parliament is a microcosm of society. The social and economic profile of parliamentarians communicate various messages. It tells about the nature of society. It tells about the economic and political system. It tells about the distribution of resources in society. The changing profile indicate the level and direction of social change. It helps us in evaluating the quality of democracy.

In democracies it is assumed that circulation of elites take place. Democracies differ from the static authoritarian systems where monolithic elite holds power. The competitive party system allows the competition among elites and the maintenance of democracy.

In Indian context, we can analyse the changing profile of Parliament in the light of theory of circulation of elites.

Phase I : Independence - till 1960's

The first parliament was dominated by the upper class and upper caste elites. Most of them were western educated professionals. 64.5% of the Lok Sabha members

were professionals, 36.7% were lawyers. The composition of Rajyasabha was like an elder house. There was greater representation of learned people in Rajyasabha.

Phase II : 1960's - 1970's

It was the phase when first major change in socio-economic profile of parliamentarians was witnessed. It reflected the great changes that have occurred in Indian politics. In 1960's the green revolution was introduced. Different scholars like Rudolf and Rudolf Myran, Weiner, Charles Bettelheim have produced interesting studies which reflect the phenomena of the rise of "intermediate castes" i.e. the OBC factor in Indian politics. They were called bullock capitalists. The rise of this class reflected change in Indian political scene. For the first time India witnessed the breakdown of Congress system (1967) in states. Rural elites replaced urban elites in the Parliament. Middle class replaced upper class. Lawyers and teachers were replaced by agriculturalists. This phenomena is known as "Ruralisation of Indian Parliament". It is also known as Modernisation of tradition and Traditionalisation of modernity. In context of Rajyasabha a new tendency was observed. Those politicians who lost their seats in direct elections got nominated to Rajyasabha. Rajyasabha became Refuge for rejected politicians. Rajyasabha seats were also allocated to the persons with criminal background in return of their services to the politicians. It has given a blow to the prestige of Rajyasabha. It has shown the rise of criminalisation of politics.

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### Phase III — 1970's — 1980's

Prof. M.P. Singh, ~~and~~ Sunil Khitrawala talks about the emergence of professional politicians. According to the study of Sunil Khitrawala, Indira Gandhi started a new type of politics. She wanted to challenge the power of old party bosses. She started ~~new~~ youth politics. Youth Congress came into existence. Indian youth were attracted to politics in the formative years of their careers. Thus emerged the 'full time politicians'. JP movement was also responsible for involving many students in politics.

### Phase IV — Change in 1980's

The major change was witnessed in 1989. This change is known as "regionalisation and federalisation" of Indian politics. The regional parties came to dominate the parliament. The OBC's formed the major constituents of the parliament. The presence of persons with criminal background also increased. It reflects the growing criminalisation of Indian politics. By 1990's

By 1990's Dalits also became imp. factors.

Thus in many ways we can say that the Indian society has changed. The role of traditional elites is taken up by the new elites. In this context, circulation of elites has happened. However in one context Indian society has not moved much i.e. the context of representation of women. The average representation remained bet<sup>n</sup> 7-8%. Here also, there is a greater representation of the women belonging to upper class and urban elite sections.

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The socio-economic profile of Parliamentarians shows that the affirmative measures like reservations do impact positively on the depressed or the neglected sections of the society. Hence same logic is been applied for giving representation to the women in Parliament.

The 15th Lok Sabha gives some positive indications. The no. of women in Parliament has increased: 2004 - 45 → 2009 - 59. The no. of educated persons has also increased comparatively. We can see the positive impact of the efforts of the election commission towards its decriminalisation towards Indian scene. EC has brought various measures to improve the quality of democracy in the country.

### Pressure Groups

⑧ Changing trends in Pressure group-politics in India.

According to Almond and Powell there are various groups which have direct bearing on the political process while political parties are formal and openly recognised part of the political system. Political parties compete for power. Pressure Groups are both formal and informal. They don't directly aspire to be in power but they seek to influence the public policy. They perform the job of "interest articulation". Considering the imp role of pressure groups scholars like Prof. E. E. Schattschneider calls them as "anonymous empire" or "invisible govt".

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Pressure Groups employ variety of techniques like lobbying, means influencing legislative parties, funding of parties, manipulation of public opinion through media, use of PILs, demonstrations.

Robert Dahl believes that modern democracy is based on Pressure group politics. They are very important channels of communication between masses and elites.

Jean Blondel talks about the dynamic nature of pressure group politics. The nature of pressure group politics changes when other aspects of

socio-political system changes. We can apply Blondel's thesis to understand the changing nature of Pressure group politics in India. The scholar who has contributed towards the analysis of PGP in Indian context is "Robert Hardgrave". He has classified Indian pressure groups into following types:

#### (1) The Business Groups

Business groups have always played significant role in Indian politics. Today, they are among the largest and one of the most powerful of all PGs in India. Business organisations are existing in India even before independence. In 1884, the first major business association "Calcutta Chambers of Commerce" was established. FICCI came into existence in 1927. The aim of FICCI was to protect the interest of national capitalists. Today the important associations include FICCI and ASSOCHAM.

Over the years they are emerging as the major force in Indian economy and politics. They are influencing

the policies of govt. Most of the groups have good relations with all major parties. They provide money power to politics. They use press as an instrument. They have also set up educational and charitable institutions. They also use the services of lawyers to challenge the laws harming their interests. These groups have functional autonomy in Indian context because they are not adjuncts to any political party. Their influence has increased after introduction of NEP. Business delegations are now the common features of foreign visits. We also conduct summits between the business groups of India and other regional organisations.

Congress, BJP, CPI(M), CPI, TDP, DMK, AIADMK

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## (2) Workers Groups

### Trade Unions

There are various trade unions in India. Trade unions are existing even before independence. The organisation of workers and employees are commonly known as trade unions. The main objective of trade unions is to promote the interests of working classes by collective bargaining and negotiations. The common demands of trade unions are like increase in wages, participation in management, social security provision and conditions of work.

The history of trade union movement goes back to pre-independence period. The Bombay mill hands association was founded in 1890. Gandhi himself organised Ahmedabad

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textile labour association. In 1920 Lala Lajpatrai founded AITUC. Later on it was completely taken over by Leftist Congress formed another central organisation of workers known as INTUC (Indian National Trade Union Congress). The trade unions in India are openly linked to political parties. This relation has been static. e.g. the labour wing of Congress party is INTUC. The labour wing of CPI is AITUC. The labour wing of <sup>CP(M)</sup> CPI(M) is CITU. The labour wing of BJP is Hind Majdoor Sangh. The trade unions maintain close link with political parties. However country does not have strong trade union movement. Trade unions suffer from resources. The existence of so many trade unions cuts at the root of unity of the working class in India. There is inner rivalry and factionalism. Hence they often failed to achieve their objectives.

### (3) Peasant Organisations

The peasant movement in India is also existing since preindependence period. The All India Kisan Sabha was set up in 1935. There were regional peasant organisations also like Bihar Kisan Sabha and UP Kisan Sabha. The Kisan Sabha movement was responsible for victory of Congress in elections to provincial legislatures held in 1937. In contemporary times we do not have an all India organisation of farmers. There are different organisations like Bharatiya Kisan Union of Mahendra Singh Tikait, Shetkari Sanghatan of Sharad Joshi. The Bharatiya Kisan Union is primarily related to the demands of rich farmers. Their demands include reduction in the prices of electricity and charges of canal water, remunerative prices for sugarcane.

cheaper inputs, scrapping of land ceiling and minimum wages. The shetkari sanghatam is primarily concerned with the problems of agricultural labourers. The slogan of this sanghatam is 'Bharat vs India'. They point towards the growing gap between the urban and the rural area.

The demands of peasant organisations vary from state to state. The peasant groups are also not a powerful pressure group. In India due to mass ignorance, casteism, inadequate financial resources they are not in a position to exert themselves as a class. There are differences between small farmers and big landlords on one hand and marginal farmers and landless labourers on the other hand.

#### (4) Students organisations:

Students organisation play big role in Indian politics. Distt student groups are also existing even before independence. Lala Lajpatrai founded All India students union in Punjab in 1928. In 1936, communists organised the students in the name of All India Students Federation (AISF). Muslim students all formed All India Muslim Students Federation in 1937.

In post independence phase students organisations played significant role. Each political party organises student union. In 1970 National Students Union of India (NSUI) emerged as a student wing of Congress. Akali Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) is linked with BJP. The students forum of Akali Dal is known as All India Sikh Students Federation.

In case of Assam and Manipur students organise powerful and strong agitations on foreigners issue.

Today the Telengana movement is also supported by large number of students.

In academic sphere student movements do make various types of demands like reduction in fees or provision of subsidised transport, etc.

#### (5) Professional Organisations

There are several organised professional pressure groups like All India Medical Association. There are many Bar Associations. There are many Teacher Associations.

#### (6) Communal Groups

They are very active in India. They are looking for extension of rights and privileges for members of their community. The prominent communal groups can be classified as under

(a) Caste Groups: The important caste groups are Jat Mahasabha, Kshatriya Mahasabha, Gujjar Sabha. Recently there has been a very active movement led by Gujjar Sabha in Rajasthan. They were demanding the Gujjars should be given status of STs.

Caste associations play very imp role because caste is a very dominating factor determining the voting behaviour of Indians.

(b) Religious Groups: The imp. religious groups are Hindi Mahasabha, Anglo-Indian Christians Association, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen.

(c) Linguistic Groups: Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, P' mil Sangham, Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu.

(d) Anomic Groups: we do have number of instances of anomic group behaviour. Such groups employ techniques like Hartal, gheros, rail roko, etc. It was the result of the pressure of one such anomic group which demonstrated its anger towards cow slaughter that the then Home Minister Gulzarilal Nanda had to quit his cabinet post.

## (7) Women Groups

They are not very influential in politics. They are also affiliated to political parties. All India Women Conference of Congress, National Federation of Indian Women of CPI, All India Democratic Women Association of CPI(M).

The most important women group is SEWA. It has launched countrywide cooperative movement for strengthening condition of rural women. It is not affiliated to any party.

## (8) Latest Trends

Business groups are becoming more imp because of globalisation. Foreign lobbies are gaining greater influence in country. There is a proliferation of NGO's working in the field of HR, environment, Health, etc.

### Analysis of Pressure groups in India by Rajani Kothari

- (1) The nature of pressure groups in India is different from their western counterpart.
- (2) They are feudal in character.
- (3) They are diffused in society.
- (4) They have multigroup character.
- (5) Indian political system for long did not consider them as legitimate. So most of them work through political parties.

### Views of Robert Hardgrave

According to him pressure groups perform following functions.

- (1) As an agents of modernisation.
- (2) As a reservoir of political leadership.
- (3) For increasing political consciousness.
- (4) For putting strains on the political system.

### General Trends in India

- (1) Their number has increased because of the rolling back of the state.
- (2) Pressure Groups in India exhibit both traditional & modern features.
- (3) The ethnic pluralism, socio-economic diversity & regional diversities have resulted into large number of communal groups.

(4) Pressure Groups work in a multiparty system. So we also see shifting loyalties.

## Electoral Behaviour

### Context of the Analysis of Electoral Behaviour:

#### (i) Demographic Analysis

To know the extent of party system in India to understand quality of democracy.

Modern theories of democracy: i.e. the elitist and the pluralist models primarily defined democracy in terms of free, fair, freeless and regular elections. Democracy gets legitimacy when voters exercise their voting rights. The Indian Constitution from the very beginning had given 'right to vote' for every adult citizen irrespective of religion, caste, creed or gender. Indian democracy was an experiment. India was exceptional in the sense that from the very beginning it was inclusive democracy. If we compare it with West, democracy has evolved from exclusionary to inclusionary. Gary Young has praised Indian democracy in comparison to the American democracy. David Butler in his study "India decides" points out that India stands out not only as the largest democracy in formal sense but also in substantive sense of the term. In India governments have been changed not by coups or revolutions but by people through democratic process.

The Electoral behaviour of Indian people can be compared with that of Western countries. C.P. Bhamani believes that the Western countries suffer from democratic deficit because day by day people are becoming depoliticised. Western democracies get legitimacy only by 30 to 40 % of the voters turnout. However in Indian context there is a gradual increase in voting in each successive election. He believes Nehru to be responsible for creating awareness of democratic right to vote among Indian people.

According to Prof. MPSingh to large extent Indian voters are responsible for the success of India's democracy. Indian voters reflect much more mature behaviour in comparison to their counterparts in other developing countries.

Some of the important trends in the behaviour of Indian people can be analysed as under:

(1) In terms of participation, there has been an increasing trend. This time also we had a healthy turnout of 58.4%. The turnout in the last 5-6 elections was also in the range of approx. 60%.

(2) In present elections we see considerable variations on state-by-state basis.

(a) States with higher turnout (>70%) — West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

(b) Jammu & Kashmir, Bihar, UP, Gujarat, Rajasthan (<50%).

(c) Tamil Nadu has shown sharp increase of 12%.

(d) Bihar has shown sharp drop of 13%.

In most of the cases turnout did not change much.

#### Reason for Nonparticipation

According to the study conducted by Centre for Studies of Developing Societies (CSDS) those who did not vote it was not because of lack of interest. Very marginal sections gave lack of interest as the reason. Otherwise people gave circumstantial reasons.

The Gender gap in turnout has been indicative of the trend that it is getting narrower with each election. This time the gap was just 4% between males and females.

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on the basis of education

The studies show that the turnout is not the preserve of the well educated class. There was a high participation of illiterates also.

on the basis of Age

There is not much variation in the voter turnout if we take age as the criteria. In fact there is a greater turnout among the older people. So the turnout among people under 25 yrs of age was around 55% and above 25 yrs of age was around 58%.

Muslim participation was 53%.

STs - 60%.

SCs - 53%.

Upper Castes - 56%.

OBC's - 58%.

Conclusion

The above data related to the participation shows that there are minor differences in voting behaviour from democratic criteria. According to Yogendra Yadav, Indian citizens are fairly well integrated in the political system.

1) Issues of Election:

10th general elections can be called as issue less elections. Some of the high profile issues like Indo US N-deal or strategic autonomy led by Communist or Terrorism or Weak leader led by BJP did not have much relevance. In this election we did not see slogans like 'India Shining' or 'Aam Aadami'. Mostly economic issues dominated. People wanted that govt. should improve infrastructure, drinking water, electricity, food and shelter. This shows that economy matters for Indian people.

It also shows that various kinds of identity politics played by the political parties have more reached to the level of saturation. Voters have rejected the kind of caste politics practiced by parties like RJD, BSP or PMK. Today voters are looking for something more than the identity politics. Muslims refused to remain hostage to the political parties like SP or BSP. Congress is regaining the ground.

Views of Yogendra Yadav : He does not believe in the end of caste politics. But he believes that simple identity politics has become electorally non-rewarding. People are looking for "identity plus" politics. It means the issue of identity should be combined with the basic interests.

According to him, Congress did not win because it had something special but because it did present a fair record of governance, non-divisive approach. The vote share of BJP decreased because of exclusionist politics.

Conclusion : A shift in favour of Congress is not a short term phenomena but reflects the political fundamentals. In Indian context, exclusionary politics can't provide a road to power on durable bases. We need secular and inclusive approach.

### Incumbency Factor

When elections become routine then delivery of governance become important. The days of blind AIC are over in Indian politics. Incumbents do not suffer any advantage or disadvantage. People have become mature enough to understand that which govt is in a better position to provide better choices of life.

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Leadership factor: According to the survey conducted by CSDS as to what extent leadership matters in case of voters, the studies show that leadership is not a big issue. However, personal popularity of the leader played greater role at state level. However, at state level also we can link the popularity of leaders with their performance. Chief Ministers played vital role in helping their parties. Imp are Sheila Dixit, Nara Patnaik, Nitish Kumar, Narendra Modi, etc.

The impact of Charismatic leader is decreasing and Indian voters are becoming more rational.

Regionalism factor: The combined tally of Congress and BJP has gone up i.e. from 283 in the past to 322 seats. Some people predict that the balance of Indian politics is shifting in favour of national political parties. However, the analysis of the vote share shows that obstacles of regional parties are premature. In reality, the vote share of national parties have actually gone down by 1.3 % points. If we add left parties to it, there will be a total loss of 2.1 % points in the vote share. The combined share of regional parties have shown remarkable continuity. Voting share in 13th election was 29.3%, in 14th election again 29.3% and in 15th election it was 29.2%.

According to survey by CSDS, people were more concerned with the regional and local issues.

Regionalism remains the long term tendency of Indian politics. States remain the principle arena of politics. State specific parties will be relevant. Regionalization of national parties can also be seen. The role of regional leaders in national parties was also imp e.g. role of Rajshankar Reddy, Arun Gogoi, B.S. Yediyurappa.

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BJP has lost across the country. Congress party has gained significantly even if unevenly. This shows that the internal balance between the two political parties has shifted in a fundamental and perhaps enduring manner in the favour of Congress party. This shift appears to be more than usual ups and downs.

### Conclusion:

The above trends show that Indian masses are becoming more mature. India represents not simply the case of formal democracy but also substantive democracy. The introduction of 73rd amendment act has resulted into the increased awareness of masses. The implementation of rural development & employment schemes like NREPS has brought govt. near to the people. Local democracy has played significant role in the evolution of participatory democracy in India.

### Views of CP Bhambrani

- (1) The meaning of Lok Sabha elections is not simply limited to the quantitative assessment of voters turnout. The real significance lies in the fact that Indian voters have used their rights in a very sensible manner. Voters participation in 1967 which was around 61.3% was significant factor behind the breakdown of the Congress system.
- (2) In India elections have become a means to punish the politicians and to ensure democratic political culture in country.
- (3) Indian voters responded to emergency situations with faith in electoral mechanism.
- (4) The Indian political journey began with low political participation. Gradually the electoral process has gained momentum and today elections are contested in highly competitive atmosphere because voters are actively involved in exercising right to vote.

He also highlight some critical areas of concern in voters participation in India -

- (1) The urban middle class is loosing enthusiasm
- (2) Electoral system shows certain defects like the involvement of Mafia and criminals. However he also highlights the positive role played by EC towards cleansing of the evils related to the electoral system.

## National and Regional Parties -

### Ideological and Social bases of parties

#### Nature of Party System in India

Significance of Party System to India — Political parties are treated as the most important institutions in representative democracy. Party systems are so important because they perform the important input function. Various studies in contemporary times related to democracy focus on the study of parties. According to Sartori party system is defined not on the basis of the number of parties but on the basis of number of parties making impact on the political system. Morris Duverger has established link between the type of electoral system and the nature of party system. If electoral system is of simple majoritarian type the party system will be two-party system. If electoral system is proportional representation type then party system will be multiparty system. India does not fit in the framework of Duverger's law. Despite having simple majoritarian type system India has come to show the cases like

one party dominance system and multiparty system. The example shows that the history, society and culture are important variables shaping the party system. Today India is a multiparty system. It has given rise to coalition era in Indian politics. We can analyse the evolution of party system in India on the basis of following phases:

### Phase I - Preindependence

Even during national movement we see the existence of various political parties like INC, Muslim League, Communist parties, etc. INM represented diverse ideological trends. However in Indian context INC emerged as "Hegemonic party". INC was rainbow coalition. It represented different ideological trends, both leftist and rightist. It represented the interests of minorities as well as majorities, peasants as well as capitalists. It started as a pressure group in 1885. Then it became mass movement. Gandhi played an important role in organisation of Congress on party lines. The other two parties i.e. Muslim League and CPI represented the smaller sections of Indian society. Both these parties had both cooperative and conflictual relationship with Congress in different phases.

### Phase II - 1952 - 1967

This phase was termed as 'one party dominance system' by Morris Jones and 'Congress system' by Rajani Kothari. The Congress system reflected the dominance of Congress in Indian politics. The Congress party's electoral performance from 1952 till 1967. The Congress always benefited from the electoral system. It obtained majority of seats yet its electoral share was less in proportion to the number of seats it won. It was at the core of the system.

Other parties were on the periphery. According to Rajani Kothari, opposition even in combination was not in a position to defeat Congress. The non-congress parties had ~~no~~ did not have even a rare chance of forming govt. Congress was dominating both at the centre as well as in the states. It combined the role of the govt as well as opposition. Effective opposition came from within rather than opposition parties. Rajani Kothari calls Congress as 'party of consensus' and other political parties as 'parties of pressure' - status of other political parties was not more than a pressure group.

Congress system has shaped functioning of different organs of govt. Congress syst has made the interpretation of powers of President as nominal. It facilitated the rise of prime ministerial form of govt. in India. Congress sys. was also shaping the nature of Indian federation. The autonomy of federal units was overshadowed by the rule of Congress at centre.

The 4th general elections in 1967 was the crucial. In that year, non-congress govt. came to power in 13 states. In 1969 Congress witnessed the split. It ruled with the outside support of CPI and DMK. It was reduced to minority at the centre. The monopoly of Congress was broken.

Thus the Indian political system showed a significant shift.

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### Phase III - 1969-1975 (Two Party System)

This was the phase of confrontation between Congress and JP movement. In 1971 snap elections were held. Indira Gandhi aimed to establish the direct link with public. She wanted to bypass the institutionalised structure of Congress Party. She had converted the Congress Party into personalised party. This tradition was different from Nehruvian tradition. Nehru made an effort to promote democratic character within the Congress itself. Since Indira Gandhi got challenge from the regional bosses. She wanted to secure her position from such internal challenges to her authority. The Congress party became pyramidal in nature. Here power was concentrated at the top and there was mass-mobilisation at base and the pattern that is commonly found in socialist or dictatorial forms of govt started emerging. Rajani Kothari blames Indira Gandhi for starting the deinstitutionalisation in Indian democracy. According to Stanley Kochanek the change in the nature of the Congress party had given blow to the federal system in India. The other leaders provoked mass movements against Congress. JP and Morarji Desai started mass movements to reinstitutionalise democracy in India. Till 1975 situation became uncontrollable. Allahabad High Court had declared Indira Gandhi's election as invalid. This was the crisis <sup>phase</sup> ~~period~~. Ultimately emergency was declared. The federal form of govt. was eclipsed and the unitary form of govt. came into existence because of imposition of emergency. In 1977 elections were held. Janata Party came to power. It was a coalition. It can be treated as the second experiment of coalition in Indian context after the 1967 experiment. Janata party was coalition of Congress (O) of Morarji Desai, Bharatiya Lok Dal of Chavan

Singh, Congress for Democracy of Jaggivanm and Bahugun, Socialist party of Madhu Limaye, George Fernandes and Madhu Dandavate and the Bharatiya Jan Sangh led by Vajapeyi and Advani.

The Congress and Janata Party captured  $3/4$ th of the total votes. It gave the impression that two party system is been evolved. However this phase ended soon. Janata party was fragmented. It was a weak coalition. The coalition partners lacked necessary attitude for exercising successful coalition. Janata Party was a hurried platform. There were ego dashes of the leaders. Party lacked cohesion and discipline. It was unable to contain different conflicts and interests.

Conclusion: (1) Janata Party govt. can be treated as an experiment of coalition. This coalition failed. This shows that India didnot have coalition culture at the national level politics by that time.

(2) The forecast that India is moving towards two party system was also proved immature.

#### Phase IV - 1980-1989

##### Restoration of Congress

This was the phase which gave opportunity to rebuild pluralist and democratic character of Congress. However no such effort was made. Prof. M.P. Singh blames both Indira Gandhi as well as JP for not attempting to build institutionalised parties in India. Indira Gandhi went for the projecting personalisation — and JP went for mass movement.

Congress came back to power on the slogan "govt that works".

According to MP Singh it is coming back of the Congress but not of the Congress system. Congress sys had gone. States started asserting their autonomy. Congress continued to rule till 1989. Congress kept on losing one state after the other. India witnessed the demands for state autonomy. These demands took the shape of separation. The highly active states in this phase were J & K, Punjab and Assam. This was the phase when centre appeared weak. Regional groups and parties started asserting themselves. The nature of federalism in India started changing. From cooperative federalism we were moving on the path of bargaining model of federalism. Rajiv Gandhi had to enter into peace accords with major regional parties.

#### Phase II      Age of Coalition — 1989 onwards

Coalition was not a new phenomena in Indian context. During the phase of Congress system, Congress itself was a grand coalition. Indian states have experienced coalition politics much earlier. Even the Janata experiment can be treated as an example of coalition at national level.

However, the age of coalitions formally began in 1989.

It is said that coalition politics has come to establish itself.

The coalition phase in formal sense began with 9th general election. It brought VP Singh into power. The coalition politics in India can be divided into two phases: (i) 1989 — 1999      (ii) 1999 —

#### Distinctive features of phase (i) :

In this phase the Indian coalition experiment resembled with the coalition culture of Italy. During this phase following tendencies were prominent :

① Negative coalitions were formed

② Coalition means politics of consensus and accommodation. This aspect was missing.

③ The negative characteristics of a coalition govt. i.e. nongovernance and political instability became the feature of Indian politics. During this phase India saw various experiments for providing stable governance but it failed.

The people were disappointed with the functioning of the system. During this time political scholars started questioning the relevance of parliamentary form of govt. Scholars like H.A. Patilkar started suggesting the need to adopt Presidential form of govt. In parliamentary form of govt. existence of executive depends on Parliament. In Presidential form of govt. the term of executive and legislature is fixed.

The imp. political experiments of this time can be listed as

① The rule of V.P. Singh govt. (1989-90) minority & Coalition govt.

② The Narasimha Rao govt. (1991-1996)

This was a minority govt. This govt. later got converted into a majority govt. by questionable means. The final months of Rao govt. resulted into the uncovering of major political corruption scandals. This has brought the negative features of coalition into limelight. It also contributed for the worst performance of Congress in elections. In May, 1996

③ In May 1996 BJP emerged as single largest party. But without enough strength to prove majority on the floor of the house. Atal Bihari Vajpayee govt. lasted for 13 days.

Parties were wishing to avoid another election formed 14 party coalition govt. - United Front govt. under former Chief Minister of Karnataka H.D. Deve Gowda. His govt. also lasted for less than a year. In March 1997 I.K. Gujral replaced

Devagaudar. He led 16 party United Front Coalition. In both the cases, Congress Party withdrew its support.

④ - New elections in 1998 brought BJP into power. It had ~~over~~ 182 seats. It was not having majority. In April 1999 the BJP led coalition fell apart after 13 months.

⑤ BJP formed new coalition. This coalition gained majority in 1999 elections. This was the first successful experiment of the functioning of coalition govt. in India. BJP remained in power up till 2004. In 2004 it lost elections to Congress led UPA.

⑥ UPA was the second experiment towards the successful working of coalition govt. in India. 2009 elections brought Congress led UPA to power.

The analysis of the second phase of coalition experiment shows that gradually India has moved towards maturing political culture. Indian political system has devised various mechanisms to contain coalitions. The common minimum programme and the pre-poll alliance have emerged. Besides this, major steps were taken to stop the political corruption by modifying Anti-defection law and by fixing the number of ministerial post in the govt.

This shows that slowly we are moving towards building the successful coalition culture. Coalition politics is unavoidable in Heterogeneous society like India. Coalition is not bad in itself. Coalitions have been existing in countries of continental Europe since long. Many political scholars including Prof. M.P. Singh consider emergence of coalition form of govt. as a healthy trend. They are more representative than the non-coalition govt. Coalition govt. is also a positive development in context of federal structure and its working in Indian context.

Today India is a consociational democracy.

### Patterns of Coalition Politics in India

Q. Discuss major trends of coalition politics. Do you think coalition is good for India? Give suggestions for improvement.

According to Prof. Ogilvy, Coalition is a cooperative arrangement under which different political parties combine to form the govt. According to Prof. M.P. Singh, coalition is a necessary mechanism to orchestrate the activities of different political parties. Coalition leads to divided govt. Coalitions result into fractured political landscape. The President, the Prime Minister, Cabinet, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and state govt. reflect different political parties and groups. Coalition represents interparty grouping in legislature. Coalition exists for both — for the formation of govt. as well as for opposition of the govt.

#### Conditions to emerge a coalition:

- (1) Coalition emerge in heterogeneous societies.
- (2) " " in parliamentary form of govt.
- (3) " " in multiparty system.

Coalitions are common in countries like Germany, Austria, Belgium and Switzerland. These countries can be treated as the example of healthy coalition culture. Coalition govt. result into the establishment of greater representative governance in comparison to the consensus democracy. Coalition is natural in a fragmented society. It is a political expediency in such societies.

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## Theories of Coalitions : Indian Case

### ① Duverger's theory :

The nature of the electoral system shapes the party system. The simple majoritarian type of electoral system results into the emergence of two party system. The proportional representation type of electoral system results into multiparty system. The case of India can be treated as an exception to this thesis. India is having coalition govt. because of existence of multiparty system despite having the "simple past the poll" system. The case of India shows that coalition govt. is inevitable in heterogeneous societies. India has not adopted the proportional representation system but it is emerging on its own.

### ② Riker's theory :

Riker's theory point out that parties want to acquire maximum power. Hence they prefer to form minimal sized coalitions. Minimal sized coalitions are termed as "minimal winning coalitions" by Riker. However India gives the example of oversized coalitions.

③ There is another theory of coalition which suggests that for the stability of coalitions, coalitional partners should have similar policy preferences. This type of coalition is known as "minimal range" coalition. Again in case of India we have many examples where parties with different ideological background are combining to form coalition. India presents the case of "Rainbow coalitions". India presents the case of "catch all parties".

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## Merits and Demerits of Coalition Politics

### Demerits :

- ① Political instability
- ② Unnecessary expenditure
- ③ Electoral fatigue
- ④ It retards economic growth
- ⑤ Political instability may result into the problem for national security
- ⑥ It results into political corruption i.e. vote trading or defections
- ⑦ It prevents the emergence of bold policies

### Merits :

- ① It is more representative than two party system.
- ② " " " democratic
- ③ It strengthens federalism
- ④ It offers greater choices to electorates
- ⑤ Diverse parties represents diverse social interests.

## Prominent Trends in Coalition Politics of India

We can divide the coalition politics into two phases.

- ① Phase of immaturity - till 1999
- ② Phase of maturity - 1999 onwards

The major trends associated with the functioning of coalition govt. are

- ① Initially we saw the emergence of coalitions with negative orientations. Coalitions were formed to treat a particular party out of power rather than for making govt. work
- ② We see the little regard for ideological factor. This is more prominent at national level in comparison to states. Coalitions were formed not because of having similar

policy preferences but with the desire of sharing the benefits of power. For successful functioning of coalition we do require ideological compass to help coalition partners to navigate through the troubled waters.

⑤ Coalition partners in Indian context found to lack long term vision. Long term vision may require at times those type of decisions which may not be popular in short term. These are the testing times. In Indian context, for the sake of avoiding temporary unpopularity coalition partners often defected to gain popular advantage.

⑥ In Indian context the coalition politics reflect the decline of national parties and increasing dominance of regional parties. According to prof. M. S. Singh out of the two tendencies of Indian political sys. i.e. parliamentarism and federalism, the second element has strengthened.

⑦ The coalition govt has resulted into the increase in scale of political corruption. This phenomena is defined by former speaker Somnath Chatterjee in terms of "decline of Indian Parliament".

⑧ The coalition govt has resulted into the shifting of power from the office of prime minister to extra constitutional authorities like coordination committees or steering committees.

⑨ Often the coalitions have not respected people's mandate. Politicians appeared to be increasingly obsessed with their survival.

⑩ Coalition govt have strengthened the office of President as well as the SC.

⑪ One of the casualty of coalition-politics is the erosion of the principle of collective responsibility. At times, Cabinet speaks in many voices.

- (10) Ministers are more concerned with their personal image.
- (11) Coalition politics has increased bargaining as well as influence of bureaucracy.
- (12) In Indian case, the myth of outside support has failed invariably. Coalition with outside support proved to be a Trojan horse.

Suggestions related to the functioning of coalition form of govt. in India :

- (1) To have Presidential form of govt.

Since it gives political stability it was suggested as an option. According to J. Smith institutions are shaped by the people who work with them. Hence until and unless we develop healthy political culture institutional changes are not helpful. By any measure Parliamentary form of govt. is more representative and democratic. US is the only example where Presidential form of govt. is able to retain its democratic character. In most of the third world countries it resulted into emergence of dictatorial form of govt.

- (2) Prime Minister elected by Lok Sabha.

This suggestion does not suit because in this situation opposition will not have any meaning. It may increase political corruption. It is impracticable because parliamentary sys. works on party line.

- (3) To have national government.

In case of hung parliament.

Democracy has no meaning without opposition. National govt. is meant for emergencies only.

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### ④ Constructive vote of noconfidence:

This system can be adopted. The system is found in Germany. Here a person or a party who is moving the vote of noconfidence against the govt. must show that an alternative exists and that will be in a position to gain vote of confidence. Hence elections can be avoided.

### ⑤ Other suggestions

(i) By bringing constitutional amendment so that Prime Minister can be voted out of power only by  $\frac{2}{3}$ rd majority and not by simple majority.

(ii) President can have an extraordinary power to nominate <sup>some</sup> outstanding persons like CJI to act as the head of caretaker government.

### Conclusion

Again the conclusion is that it is unavoidable in country like India to have coalition politics. Hence more than institutional changes it is imp. to build healthy political culture. A sound coalition culture can be built in following ways -

(1) Parties should leave rigid stand and make compromises in the spirit of give and take.

(2) Coalition partners should make prepoll alliances & common minimum programmes in advance.

(3) Coalition should not be for negative purpose.

(4) " " " include large no. of partners.

(5) " culture requires working with consensus.

In India we do have the successful examples of Coalitions at state levels e.g. the coalition led by Achut Menon in Kerala in 1970's or Jyoti Basu led Left Front in West Bengal. Similarly the successful coalitions also

The experience shows that Indian parties are learning the rules of the day.

## Ideological and Social Bases of Parties

### Social Bases

Here the parties are not classified on the basis of criterion of EC. We are understanding these parties on the basis of agenda. National parties have nationalist agenda like Congress, BJP, Janata Party and BSP. Regional parties have regional agenda. They give priority to regionalism over nationalism. We can divide the country on the basis of intensity of regionalism. The areas of strong regional identity are deep south, north-east and north-west. Parties with strong regional identity are DMK, TDP, Assam Gana Parishad, PDP, AIADMK. Areas with moderate regionalism are Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, West Bengal.

Weak regionalism - Hindi speaking states.

In most of the developing countries including India ideology has lost its relevance and most of the parties reflect the paradigm of "catch all parties" (Otto von Kirchmann). Still it does not mean that parties have become entirely pragmatic or parties do not adhere to any doctrine. In Indian context parties do represent enduring ideology. The prominent bases on which we can divide the parties on the basis of ideology are

① Secularism Vs Cultural nationalism

Rokkan →  
Frozen thesis

② Class Vs Caste

③ State Vs Market

④ Nationalism Vs Regionalism

As far as the social profile of the parties are concerned we can say that the profile has not remained static. This does not mean that parties do not have core group of followers. However, the social bases are not completely frozen.

① Congress Party: Congress can be described as the party of centre. It has vacillated oscillated bet<sup>n</sup> left of centre or little right of centre. The Congress programmes like "Garibi Hatao" shows the movement towards left and "Sheelanyas pujan" as movement towards right. According to CP Bhamra, the parties of centre cannot take rigid stand. They respond to the changing needs and situations. They are flexible enough to accommodate the agenda of both right and left.

In general we can associate the ideology of Congress reflecting nationalism, secularism, multiculturalism, multi-regionalism, multi class and multi caste approach. Congress has shown many ideological transformations, from Nehruvian vision of Fabian socialism to Indira Gandhi's populism to Rajiv Gandhi's days of 'managerialism', Congress took major turns under Narasimha Rao and embraced the philosophy of neo-liberalism. Congress still faces the dilemma bet<sup>n</sup> neo-liberalism and electoral compulsions.

Under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi Congress is learning art of adaptation. It has adapted itself to the demands of coalition politics and federalism. Now

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Congress is showing better tolerance towards states. It is giving greater autonomy to state leaders like Sheila Dixit, Digvijaysingh, Amarinder Singh, etc.

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### Social Profile

The Congress been the centrist party was in a position to maintain grand coalitions. The social profile of Congress included people from different sections, class, caste, and etc. Congress also inherited such type of profile because of her role during national movement. Congress was primarily supported by the coalition of Muslims as well as lower castes. Different political parties in India maintained different types of caste equations. e.g. In case of <sup>Rajasthan</sup> Gujarat Congress represented the equation of ATGAR. Ahir, Jat, Gujjar And Rajput.

Over the years, with the rise of regional parties which found their base among the OBC sections and the rise of Dalit parties resulted into the erosion of the hold of Congress on this particular section. Over the years Muslims also started distancing from Congress. Muslims being the coming within the poor sections of the society preferred other alternatives like BSP and SP.

However, the recent elections show that Congress is again gaining back its earlier social base. This election has done better for Congress in the sense that Congress was able to get votes from Muslims as well as Sikhs and Dalits. During 1990's Congress was a party whose social support base declined excessively. It was dependent from on the residual support it got from the marginal sections of society. Today Congress is regaining its pyramidal structure. According to data collected by CSDS despite winning large number of seats i.e. 206 seats its voting share remains 28.61%. The share fell in UP Congress did well in UP, Andhra, Kerala and Rajasthan. Among the major states there

was loss of 7.6% points in vote share in Orissa.

## ② BJP

**Ideology:** BJP is a rightist party. BJP's ideology reflect the school of cultural nationalism. Rather than believing in individualism it believes in the value of collectivity. Initially its economic policy was based on 'Swadeshi'. Later on BJP has also adopted the concept of free market economy. The national agenda of BJP is summed up as "One Culture, One Nation and One Country". BJP is a cadre-based party. The ideology of BJP is spread not through its political leaders but through highly ideologically committed and active cadre of RSS. BJP is supposed to be kurasa as the disciplined organisation. The BJP's primary support base comes from upper class, middle class Brahmin and Varshya elite. Over the years BJP has tried to widen its social base. If we can call Congress as "socially inclusive" party, BJP will be "exclusive" party. It primarily represents that section of Indian society which practice Hindu religion by birth. For long, BJP couldn't make its impact on the political system because of its association with Sangh parivar. BJP's vote share remained marginal. Later on, BJP started to have greater votebank. BJP learned that in Indian context it requires new allies. BJP's rise to power from 1990's included three processes -

① BJP extended its base from northern states to new states.

② BJP attracted new social groups during its phase of expansion. It expanded from Urban to rural areas. From being upper caste party it started cultivating

major base among lower OBCs. It also started securing votes of non-Hindus.

⑤ BJP formed alliances with regional parties like PDP, AIADMK, AGP, Shiv Sena, etc.

Because of such strategy BJP-led NDA was in a position to form govt.

The present elections shows that the support base of BJP has lowered significantly. It got lowest share since 1989 elections. BJP's impact was reduced in states like Rajasthan, Punjab, etc. It also became weak in those states where it was strong. According to Yogendra Yadav the present election was not a positive vote swing for Congress but it was definitely a negative swing for BJP. Today BJP is a party with a smaller catchment area. Many of its traditional coalition partners have left NDA alliance. BJP has shown declining capacities to reach to newer groups. This shows that ability to form <sup>new</sup> coalitions has declined. Except Karnataka it is not in a position to cultivate new social base. Its expansion among Adivasis and Muslim voters has reversed. Its expansion among lower OBCs halted. It faces existential threat in its core constituencies. According to the analysis of Yogendra Yadav, BJP continues to be the first preference of the upper caste Indians. This is the only social group where BJP is ahead of Congress. However in this group also it has faced sharper than avg erosion. As such BJP presents the case of party in retreat. In order to revive it needs extraordinary accommodative leadership. It should show the capacity to attract other regional parties.

### ③ BSP

BSP reflects the sociological base comprising of Dalits. Its emergence can be traced back to BAMCEF (Backward And Minorities communities Employees Federation) founded by Kanshiram. Party formed its ideological base from the thoughts of leaders like Phule and Ambedkar. Party is against Manuvad. It promotes politics of Bahujan i.e. the subaltern section. However many scholars consider BSP as a catch all party. Today BSP has adopted the concept of 'Savajan' rather than 'Bahujan'. BSP has entered into alliance with upper castes and upper classes also.

The sociological profile of BSP is that it is primarily supported by Dalits. In recent elections BSP secured 52% of the total dalit votes. It also secured 27% of STs votes, 7% of Muslim votes and 3-4% of upper caste votes. In case of Dalits, BSP primarily represents the support of 'Jatav community', the community to which Majavati belongs.

### ④ Communist Parties

This elections has brought pessimistic picture about the left parties in India. From historic height of 61 seats in previous Lok Sabha it could secure only 24 seats. In Kerala was the scene of low tide the case of West Bengal can be treated as the political earthquake. Alliances with which left had joined has not done well in states like Tamil Nadu & AP. Over the last two decades its voting share has decreased from 10% in 1990's to 8% in last elections and below 8% this time. The left movement in India

is unable to expand its base beyond West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura.

There is a stagnation in the support base of Dalits. More than half of the votes of left parties belong to the poor and very poor. In terms of social profile, first voters are dalits and Muslims. Despite the claims of representing the proletarian class, 80% votes comes from rural areas. Notwithstanding the self image of attracting the youth section because of radical programmes, the statistics show that the left parties no longer attract greater than any support from younger voters. In West Bengal the major support base of left is rural as well as urban middle classes.

As far as the ideology of the left movement is concerned we find different school of thoughts. There are parties supporting parliamentary role to socialism as well as parties which are Marxist. On economic front, communist parties maintain traditional socialist agenda of uplifting the deprived sections of society and improving their conditions of life.

[Q] Write a short note on major tendencies in Indian party system.

Two tendencies -- Fragmentation  
Regionalisation

'Fragmentation' means splintering of national level parties into regional fragments. eg. Formation of parties like HEP out of Congress or BJD out of JD.

'Regionalisation' means regional parties playing significant role in national politics. Parties like NC, Akali Dal or DMK are well recognised as regional or state specific parties. Still they do have their impact in national level politics.

The above three regional parties are playing imp role since 1952. 1980's was the decade when large no. of regional parties came into existence and increase their presence. The imp parties in this context are J.D.P., A.G.P., Shivsena, J.D.U., B.S.P. and S.P.

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