

Trends in Indian Politics since Independence

NITA MALIK, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR & HEAD, PG DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE

HANS RAJ MAHILA MAHAVIDYALAYA, JALANDHAR

Contents

- Introduction
- Formation and Objective of United Progressive Alliance
- National Democratic Front
- Emergence of Coalition Government
- Role of Regional Parties in Coalition Politics
- Emerging trends of Communalism in India
- Impact of Dalit Politics
- Right To Information Act 2005
- Four Major developments from 1982-1992
- Creamy Layer Judgement by Supreme Court
- Conclusion

Introduction

- How has India's politics changed over the past few years? This is as important for setting the agenda of the new government as it is for assessing the performance of the incumbent one. That the political discourse has coarsened is self-evident. There is greater intrusion of the media into public and private life, & a lot of what they serve up is degrading, rather than enlightening or redemptive.
- A lot of India's politics today are focused on continuing to modernize and industrialize the nation. Higher wages and more jobs have yielded higher tax revenue for the government, and lots of that money has gone to infrastructure. Since roughly 2015, infrastructure projects have brought electricity to over 15,000 of India's small and very remote villages, and connected thousands of homes to roads and transportation routes. This is helping to correct a disparity that existed for decades in India as the cities developed, where remote areas were too-often ignored and remained isolated from national economic and transportation networks.

Formation and Objective of United Progressive Alliance

- The United Progressive Alliance is outcome of results of the 14th Lok Sabha elections. In the general elections of 2004, the ruling BJP was stunned by the scale of defeat. The united progressive alliance was not formed before elections but to take shape after the election. A meeting of newly elected members of Parliament of the congress and its allies was held on May 16, 2004 in New Delhi. The alliance was named as the united progressive alliance and Smt. Sonia Gandhi elected unanimously its leader. UPA consist of 15 Political Parties. Main Political Parties of UPA were congress, National Janata Dal, Nationalist Congress Party, D.M.K, P.M.K, TRS, M.D.M.K, Lok Jana Shakti R.P.I (A), Muslim League, Sikkim Democratic Front, Kerala, Congress (J), R.P.I, (G), etc. on May 22, 2004 UPA formed the govt. under the leader ship of Dr. Man Mohan Singh, This Alliance also prepared a common Minimum Programme.

Formation and Objective of United Progressive Alliance Contd.

- Six basic principles and objectives of UPA are as follow:
 - To maintain and promote social harmony, enforce the law without fear and prejudice.
 - To keep up the economic growth rate between 7 to 8 percent for the next ten years.
 - To work mere for welfare of peasants, farm workers and especially the workers of unorganized sector.
 - To strengthen the women from political, educational, economic and legal aspects.
 - To provide equality of opportunity, especially in employment and education to scheduled castes, scheduled tribe, other backward classes and religious minorities.
 - To increase the production power or producing power of the society viz. entrepreneurs traders, scientists, engineers and professionals.

National Democratic Front

- On 15th May, 1999 in an effort to protect Unity and Stability the BJP and its allies formed an Alliance with common manifesto called National Democratic Alliance – Atal Behari Vajpayee elected as leader of the NDA. The following are the policies and programmes of NDA:
- NDA promised to free the nation of the triple curse of Bhookh (hunger) `bhay` (fear) and `bhrashtachar` (Corruption).
- NDA promised administrative reforms including those for the police and other civil services.
- NDA promised to enact legislation to provide an eligibility criterion that the offices of state legislature, executive and Judicial are held only by naturally born Indian citizens.
- NDA promised to take measures for ensuring a fixed term of five years for all elected bodies, including legislatures.
- NDA extended its hands of friendship to minorities.
- NDA promised to bring GDP growth to 7 to 8 percent and to control deficits fiscal and revenue.

National Democratic Front Contd.

- NDA govt. promised to give strong `Swadeshi` thrust to the national economy.
- The NDA is committed to achieve population stabilization by 2010.
- The NDA govt. would eradicate unemployment.
- The NDA govt. promised to appoint a commission to review the constitution of India.
- The NDA promised harmonious centre-state relations in the light of the Sarkari Commission.
- The NDA promised to established Backward Area commission for each state.
- The NDA promised electoral reforms.
- The NDA promised to establish Lok Pal and to give him adequate powers to deal with corruption charges against anyone, including PM.
- The NDA promised full statehood to Delhi and Uttaranchal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh as new states.

Emergence of Coalition Government

- Coalition Politics is one of the most important features of the Indian Political System. This feature gained importance after the fourth general elections held 1967 when Congress lost its popularity and coalition governments combining various political parties came to power in nine states, out of then 16 states. This experiment has however, proved a dismal failure leaving behind certain legacies such as political instability, unprincipled alliances, encouragement to defections, centre – state tensions, ministerial corruption etc. which have established the very political system itself.

Emergence of Coalition Government Contd.

- The following are the main legacies or features of coalition governments in India:
 - **Unprincipled Alliances:** Unprincipled Alliances is the main feature that coalition government in India. We have had such unprincipled alliances between extreme leftists and extreme rightists, between secularists and communalists just for the sake of gain political ends.
 - **Political Instability:** Another important feature that coalition govt. brought in India was political instability. There were two main reasons for political instability. First, political parties have different ideologies joined but could not pull together. Secondly, the coalition govt. having only a marginal majority offered temptation to defect on the part of the coalition partners.
 - **Defectors as Chief Ministers of Coalition:** Some of the coalition ministers had defectors as their chief ministers, Rao Birendera Singh in Haryana, Charan Singh in U.P. etc formed coalition ministers after defecting from their parties or united fronts.

Emergence of Coalition Government Contd.

- **Large size of Ministries:** Coalition Ministers were very much large in size because they had to accommodate the interest of all the different partners.
- **Principle of Major Partnership:** The principle of major partnership is the offshoot of coalition politics. This principle means that the chief minister should resign immediately if the major partners of the coalition govt. withdraw.
- **Center-State Tension:** Center-State tensions developed only during the coalition era.
- **Ministers as Agitators:** It is indeed strange but a fact that minister became agitators. For example Prabhu narain, Minister of Labour and Industries and Ram Swarup Verma, Minister of Finance, in U.P, demonstrated against official language bill in Delhi in 1967. They were arrested and convicted by the Delhi magistrate. This was the first time that ministers became agitators and were arrested and convicted.
- **Straining of Relation with the Governor:** It was during the coalition era that the relations between the coalition ministry and the respective governor were straitened.

Role of Regional Parties in Coalition Politics

- Election Commission of India recognize two types of parties – state parties and National Parties. In general state parties are termed as regional parties. In July 2010, Election Commission recognized 45 regional parties. In initial years of Indian Independence, the role of regional parties in the Indian Political system was just nominal. These were not a force to be reckoned with. But the general elections held in 1967 brought them to the forefront in state politics – and many of them joined coalition government in various states of the Indian Union. Though after 1967, regional parties started playing their role in Indian Political System but despite this the Indian political system continued to be more or less party. But the election to the Ninth Lok Sabha held in 1989 brought forth hung Lok Sabha since no single party \got absolute majority in the 10th Lok Sabha. Again in 1991 none of the parties succeeded in getting absolute majority from the govt. in 1996 general elections no single party get opportunity to form the govt. nine regional parties and four national parties joined hand together and they constituted limited front govt. under the leadership of H D Deve Gowda

Role of Regional Parties in Coalition Politics Contd.

- At the time of 12th Lok Sabha Elections, 17 regional parties and two National Parties joined hands together under leadership of B.J.P. and on March 19, 1998 B.J.P formed its government, at the centre under the leadership of Atal Behari Vajpayee. On 13th October, 1999, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee had sworn again P.M. of India for third time. Along him, a 70 member National Democratic Alliance Ministry was sworn in Regional parties, DMK, Trinamool Congress, Shiva Sena, National Conference, MDMK, DMK, MSCP etc. got representation in the council of ministers. In April-May 2004, elections for 14th Lok Sabha were held. No national party is in a position to secure absolute majority in the Lok Sabha if and when elections take place. Because of this constraint to conduct electoral alliance with the regional parties. Akali Dal in Punjab, N.C.in J&K, D.M.K. and AJADMK in Tamil Nadu, Assam Gana Parishad in Assam. It seems as if an era of dependence of National Parties on the regional parties has begun.

Emerging trends of Communalism in India

- The following trends have emerged as a result of communalism in India:
 - Development of Alienation: The feeling of alienation among the people of India is a result of communalism. Due to communalism the people of some communities feel discrimination and unsafe regarding their interests. This feeling cut them off from the mainstream.
 - Development of Intolerance: Communalism has developed the feeling of intolerance. A minor incident between the people of different communities or religion takes the form of violent incident and causes much loss and chaos to life and property. Communalism is colouring the feeling with hatred, jealousy and revenge.
 - Formation of Communal Political Parties: To save the interests of one's own community, various communal political parties are being formed.
 - Elections and Communalism: Communalism has also affected the elections. All the political parties field their candidates on the basis of caste or community.
 - At the time of election the communal political parties use religious place and carry religious slogans to win maximum votes of their community.
 - Communal Riots: Communalism results in communal riots and political clashes.
 - About 304 communal riots took place in 1979-80. Several communal riots took place in India during 1992-92 and in March-April 2002.

Impact of Dalit Politics

- In Indian Society, there is a section of peoples who are economically socially and politically backward. These peoples are oppressed and exploited by other high classes. In India, these people are known as Dalit. Dalit word is not found in Sanskrit and other languages of North India. But the root of word Dalit lies in `Dall' a Hebrew language which means sufferer or helpless. In Hindi dictionary the or Dalit is used for untouchables scheduled caste o shudra.
- Effects of Dalit and `Backward Politics'
 - Development of class consciousness: Politics of Dalit has developed a spirit of class consciousness among the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes.
 - Increase in Political Consciousness: Dalit politics has created political consciousness among the Dalits. Hence, they have started influencing the politics of the nation.
 - Increased Political Participation: Dalit Politics has increased the political participation of the SCs, STs and OBC.
 - Conscious about Education: Dalit politics has created consciousness among the weaker section about the importance of education.

Impact of Dalit Politics Contd.

- Formation of Dalit Organization: Many Dalit organizations have been established and they are influencing the politics in many ways. Kalvya Sena, Scheduled Caste Federation, Dalit Sena etc are playing important role in national politics.
- Enable weaker sections: It enables the weaker sections also to join the main stream society.
- Enabled Economic Development of weaker sections: In the beginning of the 20th Century means of production were controlled by the High Class. But due to Dalit Politics SC, ST and OBC have started their own business. Enhanced the representation of SCs, STs and OBCs in public service.
- Enhanced Casteism in Administration.
- Dalit politics has increased Casteism in Indian Politics.
- Dalit politics has greatly influenced the voting behavior. Dalit politics has become one of the important factors of a determining voting behavior.

Right To Information Act 2005

- The Right To Information Act 2005 was enacted by Indian Parliament in may 2005. It got the assent of the president on 15 June, 2005. This Act came into force on 22nd October 2005. The Act provides a very wide definition of the expression, `Information which includes any material in any form including records, documents, means, e-mails, opinion, advices, press releases etc and information relating to any private body which can be accessed authority under any other law for the time being in force.
- Right to Information includes the right to –
 - Information of work, documents, records.
 - Taking notes extracts or certified copies of documents or records.
 - Taking certified samples of materials.
 - Obtaining information in the form of dinettes, floppies, tapes, video, castes or in any other electronic mode etc.

Four Major developments from 1982-1992

- National Front: In November 1989 the elections to the 9th Lok Sabha was held and no political party secured a clear majority. The five party National Front was held and no political party secured a clear majority.
- Congress (I) Government: Elections to the 10th Lok Sabha was held in May-June 1991 and the hung Lok Sabha emerged for the second time in succession. No single party secured clear majority in the Lok Sabha. Congress (I) formed the govt. under the leader ship of P.V. Narsimha Rao.
- **Ram Mandir Issue:** In June-July 1990, the BJP and Vishwa Hindu Parishad decided to construct Ram Mandir. In the meantime L.K. Advani started Rathyatra from Somnath (Gujarat) to Ayodhya (U.P.). In Bihar Rathyatra was stopped and he was arrested. BJP delegation led by Atal Behari Vajpayee met the President on 23rd October 1990 and presented letter withdrawing support to the V.P Singh Govt.

Four Major developments from 1982-1992 Contd.

- Mandal Commission Report: Prime Minister V.P. Singh announced all of a sudden the acceptance of the Mandal report on August 7, 1990 in the parliament. But this move of V.P. Singh had alienated his senior most colleagues. The student's community launched massive movements through the country against the implementation of Mandal Report.

Creamy Layer Judgement by Supreme Court

- Creamy Layer: The Supreme Court in a historical judgment on November 16, 1992 ruled that economically developed persons belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes should be denied the benefit of reservations. To this class the Supreme Court gave the name `Creamy Layer`. In February 1993, the govt. of India appointed a committee to lay down the criterion for the identification of the Creamy layer among the socially and educationally backward classes. The committee excluded the offspring's of the following persons from the reservation list:
 - The persons who have held constitutional posts of president, Vice-President, Supreme Court and High Court Judges, ministers and governors, members of UPSC and SSC.
 - Class-I officers of Armed Forces and central and state services of public sector.
 - Professionals having a gross annual; income of Rs 2.5 lakhs and above.

Emergence of BJP as a significant force in past emergency politics

- Bhartiya Janta Party is a major National political party in India. The five fold concept of `suchita` (Probity in Public Life), `Suraksha` (Security), `Swadeshi` (Economic Nationalism), `Samajik Samarasta` (Social Harmony) and `Hindutva` (Cultural Nationalism) constitute the core content and ideological pillars of BJP. BJP believes in one nation, one people, and one culture.
- Though Janata Party faced split in July in 1979 on the issue of dual membership, but this controversy didn't end even after split. On 19th March, 1980 the Parliamentary Board of Janata Party decided to majority vote that no legislator or office bearer of Janata Party shall participate in the day to day activities of the R.S.S; but leaders of the erstwhile Jana Sangh – Atal Behari Vajpayee, L.K. Advani and Nana Deshmukh expressed their strong reservation on it and recorded their dissent. On 6th April, 1980 a new political organization – The Bhartiya Janata Party was born under the president ship of Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Emergence of BJP as a significant force in past emergency politics Contd.

- In Lok Sabha election of 1984, the BJP secured only 2 seats. In 11 states Assembly Elections of March 1985 the party did not succeed much. In 9th Lok Sabha Elections of the 1989, BJP secured 86 seats. The BJP decided to support Nation Front Govt. from outside.
- In 10th Lok Sabha Elections in 1991, BJP secured 91 seats. In the elections held for 11th Lok Sabha Elections in 1996, the BJP emerged as the largest party secured 161 seats. In 12th Lok Sabha Elections held in 1998, the BJP secured 182 seats. The BJP and its allies secured 252 seats. Atal Behari Vajpayee was elected as Prime Minister of India. In 13th Lok Sabha Elections held in 1999, BJP secured 182 and its allies, 297 seats. On 10th October, National Democratic Alliance elected Atal Behari Vajpayee as Prime Minister of India. In 14th Lok Sabha Elections, BJP secured only 132 seats and lost power in centre. In 15th Lok Sabha Elections held in 2009, BJP secured only 116 seats.

Conclusion

- India's currently in a perplexing situation: While on one hand it flaunts that a vast majority of its population represents youth; on the other hand, its politics still dwells on the past and needs considerable changes.
- People have become more vigilant of their responsibilities & rights and have learnt to see through the false promises setup by political parties prior to elections. The crowd pulling Anna Hazare protests against corruption is a sign of people discovering themselves and their collective power.
- Hence, with the people's welcome intervention in politics, both actively and passively; to the political parties' realisation of the need to endorse themselves with a better performance, Indian politics is definitely headed for a better future!