

Activeness of Regional Parties in Indian Scenario"

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Abstract -

Modern democracy is an indirect or representative democracy. Large number of people in a large country like India cannot directly participate in governing. They in directly participate in the administration of affairs through elected representatives. Political parties play a particularly important role in the modern liberal democratic system. That is why such a system of governance is called the party system of governance. Thus a political party is an organized group of citizens who believe in consensus on the basis of certain principles and try through joint efforts to control the government and to implement policies. As a political organization parties try to protect the national interests. Members of political parties believe in consensus and are inspired by that their ideology. Political parties have specific ideology programs and they participate in elections on the basis of those ideology and programs. Each political party has a specific symbol which is provided by the Election Commission. Although people in different parts of India do not know the government, there is a definite idea about political parties in every people. India is a diverse country and many regional political parties highlight this diversity.

Key Words - Democracy, Development, Multiculturalism, Decentralization, Modernization, Religion, Regionalism, Social Modernization, Coalition Politics, Party System.

Introduction -

With the spread of the concept of democracy, the importance and activism of political parties in the system of democratic governance has increased abnormally. For this reason, the system of democratic governance is called party system of governance. As the size of the country and the socio-economic problems increased, so did the problems of the society. It is not as easy for common people to realize socio-economic, cultural and political problems that need to be addressed and point out the ways for the solutions. So, a person's political life can never be guided in the right direction without a political party. Moreover, by becoming a member of a political party, the common man gets an opportunity to actively participate in politics. Democracy is useless without political parties. Without parties democracy is unthinkable. In a democracy, the government is governed by the elected representatives of the people. Political parties maintain relations between the people and the representatives. The nature of the party system is based on the nature of democracy. The party system of a socialist democracy and the party system of a capitalist democracy are therefore not the same. In these two types of political systems many the party structure is of different nature. Different political systems are different and differences are observed in the party system. In fact, the party systems is inextricably linked with the political system of every country. The party system was created according to the socio-economic and political conditions of the country. For this reason, much diversity is observed in the party system of each country. There is no mention of political parties in the Indian Constitution¹. However, the constitution speaks of parliamentary democracy. This parliamentary democracy is the foundation of the party system in India. A political party system has developed in India in line with the parliamentary democratic system. In independent India, the party system expanded in response to the needs of society and politics.

In India, there is diversity and innovation in ideology and programming among political parties. Some party is keen on maintaining stability, some party is interested in revolutionary transformation of the country. There is a wide variety of social and economic programs in the parties.

Jnata Dal², Lok Dal, B.J.P, D.M.K, A.I.A.D.M.K, Congress etc. are considered to be in favour of maintaining stability. However, socio-economic reforms and change are seen among these parties. On the other hand, leftist parties like C.P.I³, C.P.I (M)⁴, C.P.I (M.L)⁵, R.S.P etc. are in favour of revolutionary change. In terms of political ideology, political parties in India are divided into leftist, rightist and moderate. In India, a number of political parties have been formed on the basis of communal attitudes. Notable among such parties are Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, Akali Dal, Ram Rajya Parishad⁶ etc. These parties are trying to prove the superiority of their respective religions. However, there is no hope for these teams to have any future or national team status. K. Shanthanam commented that " Communal parties in the long run have no future whatsoever." However, it cannot be denied that most of the political parties in India resort to religious sentiments for political gain. The matter becomes clear during process of the nomination of representatives in any polling station. Political parties in constituency where the majority of the is a voter in the constituency usually nominate represent actives from that religious community. During the campaign, the work is controlled keeping in mind the religious appeal has added another dimension to the party politics of secular India.

It is very difficult to classify India's party system properly. This party system is not a one party system like the dictatorial countries and there is no two-party system. The total number of conventional party in India will not be 50. Yet India's party system is not a

multi-party system like France's. After independence, there was no real all-India party except the National Congress. The difference in power and influence of other political parties are greater.

At that time the power and influence of the Janata Dal, Lok Dal, C.P.I, C.P.I (M), etc. and other all-India parties was not suitable to be a worthy opponent of the Indian National Congress. Professor J.C. Johari commented that "All opposition parties put together were no match to the organisation and power of this party alone." Professor Alan Ball has commented on the activism of the Indian political party system that "Dominant party systems are ones in which party competitions are allowed but one party emerges to over-shadow all the other parties."

There are many political parties in India. Yet until the fourth general election (1967), the Congress party had maintained the monopoly political power of both of the center and the states. For some time after this, non-congress parties came to power in some states but the Congress monopoly continued at the center. Again between 1971 and 1977 the dominance of the Congress in India was re-established. However, in the 1977 elections, the opposition parties formed an alliance and formed the Janata Dal which came to power. This led to the emergence of a healthy bipartisan or tripartite system in India. But the infighting led to the fall of the Janata Government in 1979 and the Janata Dal split into three factions, the Janata Dal, the Bharatiya Janata Dal, and the Lok Dal. The mid-term Lok Sabha elections of 1980 re-established the dominance of the Congress (E) party at the center and in most of the states. After this period, the Rastriya Morcha⁷ formed the government with the support of the C.P.I.M and the B.J.P. However, this government could not stay in power for long time. In the tenth Loke Sabha for elections of 1991, the Congress (E) party alone could not win a majority. From the Eleventh General Loke Sabha Election (1996), there is a tendency among the non-congress parties to form a coalition government.

Most of the important parties in India originated from the Indian National Congress. Leaders of the Janata Dal, Janata (S), Lok Dal, Hindu Mahasabha, Bharatiya Janata Dal, etc. have worked for the Indian National Congress at some point before independence. Leaders like Morarji Desai, Jagjivan Ram, Charan Singh, Bishwanath Pratap Singh, Chandrasekhar, Debilal were once prominent leaders of the Congress. They came out of the Congress and formed Janata Dal, Lok Dal etc. The activism of the party system in India can be traced back to the emergence and development of individualistic parties. Many a times the influence of a political party becomes dependent on the prestige of a leader and it was seen that the organization of a party can be strengthened by focusing on a prominent leader. Examples include the Congress party led by Jhawalal Neharu, the Congress (e) party led by Smt. Indira Gandhi, the B.J.P led by Atalbihari Bajpayee, personalities like Jyaprakash Narayan⁸ and Rammnohar lohia also influenced the Indian political party system. In many cases, there has been a breakdown in a party based on an individual or group and a new party has emerged. Examples include Smt. Indira Gandhi's Congress (e) party, Charan Singh's Lok Dal, Ranachandran A.I.A.D.M.K etc. In fact, the parties formed by the National Congress are in all respects person centred, these parties cannot be called ideological new parties. In Indian's political system most political parties believe in democratic ideals, but the structure of most political parties is not democratic. India's party system is a big problem. Organizational elections of most political parties have not been held for a long time. The political parties are being managed by a temporary organizational arrangement (ad hoc arrangement). As a result, the democratic consciousness and mentality within the party is weakening.

There is a lack of federalism among Indian political parties. The higher authorities of the party almost always impose decisions on the lower authorities, in this way all the power of the party is being concentrated. The state and regional branches of the party and the organization at each level are managed under the direction of the central leadership of the party. This centralization can be seen in the party structure of the National Congress. The entire party is led and controlled by the congress high command. For decades after independence, the leadership of the congress party and the government was in the hands of the Prime Minister. This trend started from the time of Smt. Indira Gandhi⁹ and the government of Shri Rajib Gandhi¹⁰ also maintained this trend. The same goes for Janta Dal, B.J.P, C.P.I (M), and C.P.I. Under the direction of the central organization of these all-India parties, the decisions and activities of the state branches are regulated, which further enhances the activism of regionalism.

In the Indian political system, there are very few ideological differences between the political parties. Apart from the two communist parties, no other all-India party has a clear political or economic ideology. Professor K.C Johari commented that "the Congress (I) and the Congress (V), Janata Dal and Lok Dal parties can be described as ideologically neutral organizations. As a result, it is often possible to form a coalition of all these parties or a combination of some of them, in 1977. Janata Dal was formed out of five such parties. In the case of India's political party system, regional activism can be traced back to inter-party squabbles between different parties. For almost four decades after independence, India did not have a strong opposition is a major obstacle to the success of India's parliamentary system of government. Although the number of anti-Congress parties in India is very large, the unity among these parties has not been noticed since independence.

For this reason, no strong opposition was formed at that time. Opposition parties in India were then divided into leftists and non-leftists. Until the fourth general election, the Congress had a single majority in the central and state legislatures. At that time there was no organized political party to oppose the government in any case. After losing the power to form the central government, the Congress gained the status of an opposition party for several decades. Inter-party squabbles are a significant factor behind the activism of India's regional political party system. Moreover there is a lack of discipline among the party members and conflicts within the party occur due to infighting. In 1969, the Congress party was divided into the ruling Congress and the Congress. In 1977, the Congress for Democracy was born out of Congress. In 1978 the Congress was again divided into Congress (I) and Congress (S). In 1977, the Janata Dal was formed with various parties that came out of the Congress. The Janata Dal was disbanded in July 1979 and the various factions of the disbanded Janata Dal formed the B.J.P, Janata (S), Janata (Jagjivan) and others. Following the break-up of the Congress in 1999 before the 13th Loke Sabha elections, Congress leaders including Sharad Pawar, P.A Sangma, Tariq Anwar refused to accept Sonia Gandhi who was not an Indian by birth. They were expelled from the Congress for this revolt. These expelled Congress leaders formed a new party called the Nationalist Congress. In the post-independence period, the Communist party broke up, in 1964. The Communist party split into the Communist Party of India (C.P.I) and the

Communist Party of India (Marxist). This inter-party feud in Indian politics is largely due to the activism of regional political parties.

The trend of defection has created a huge problem in the Indian political system. This trend of defection among various parties in India has been particularly noticeable since the third general election (1962) and the fourth general election (1967). In many cases, party members have left the party for personal and group interests and have neglected party discipline. This politics of defection has been particularly noticed among the Non-Communist parties. The 52nd Amendment⁹ to the constitution provides for anti-defection constitutional measures. It is for this reason that Henry Austin¹⁰ commented “ Defection was another vice against which we would have to guard.”

The organizational strength of any political party largely depends on party discipline. In a liberal democracy, however, the organizational system of political parties is generally weak. For this reason, strong political parties are not seen in the liberal political system of a liberal democracy. This also applies to India. Coalition, grand alliance, front etc. is considered as one of the features of party activism in India. The Non-Congress political party has taken this path in the face of strong opposition from the Congress. Since the fourth general election, there has been a tendency among Non-Congress parties to form a coalition government. Attempts to form a coalition government in the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala etc. started and were successful. The government at the center in 1977 and the coalition government of 1989 were actually known as a coalition government of Non-Congress parties. It is pertinent to mention that the coalition government of India was formed even before in 1967. In Kerala, the alliance between the Congress and P.S.P before 1957, the alliance between the Communists and the R.S.P in 1957, the alliance between the Congress, the P.S.P and other Communist parties in 1959 are notable examples. The grand alliance was formed in 1969 by the Adi Congress, Janata Sangh, Swatantra Praja Party¹¹ and United Socialist Party¹².

In 1977, Janata Dal was formed on the initiative of Jayaprakash Narayan¹³. This trend is also seen in state politics. Opposition parties in West Bengal formed an alliance and ousted the Congress. An example is the 1967 joint cabinet of two fronts, the United Front Cabinet of 1969 and the Left meeting of 1977 and later the Left Front Cabinet.

Another significant event in the activism of the party system in India was that formation of regional parties. All these regional parties were formed on the basis of regional demands and interests. The scope of work of all these regional parties can be seen to be limited within the regional boundaries. Therefore, the Election Commission recognizes these parties as regional parties. In the first general election (1952), the Election Commission recognized four parties as national parties and 19th as regional parties. Then the number of regional parties gradually increased and it still does. At present, a total of six political parties are recognized as all Indian national party. The six Indian national political parties are (a) Bharatiya Janata Party, (b) Indian National Congress (I), (c) Communist Party of India, (d) Communist Party of India (Marxist), (e) Bahujan Samaiwadi Party, (f) Samajwadi Party. Presently, the number of recognized regional political parties is 40 and more. Notable among the regional political parties are Trinamool Congress, Telugu Desam, D.M.K, A.I.A.D.M.K, Akali Dal, Haryana Lok Dal, Assam Gana Parisad, Muslim League, Shiv Sena, Biju Janata Dal, Rastriya Janata Dal, Himachal Bikash Congress, R.S.P, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Ghorkha Janamukti Morcha, etc. Indian national parties form alliances with regional parties for political influence and electoral success in various states.

Congress and Janata Dal formed necessary electoral alliances with Tamil Nadu D.M.K and A.I.A.D.M.K. In 1982, Prime Minister Smt. Gandhi criticized Telegu Desam as a regional party against the country's tradition and progress. Smt. Gandhi's Congress(I) formed an electoral alliance with the Tribal Youth Association in Tripura assembly election (January 1983).

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The Constitution of India-

The Constitution of India is the supreme law of India. The document lays down the framework that demarcates fundamental political code, structure, procedures, power and duties of government institutions and sets out fundamental right, directive principles, and the duties of citizens.

Janata Dal-

Janata Dal was an Indian political party which was formed through the merger of Janata Party factions, the Lok Dal, Indian National Congress, and the Jan Morcha (United) on 11 October 1988 on the birth anniversary of Jayprakash Narayan under the leadership of V. P. Singh.

C.P.I-

The Communist Party of India (C.P.I) is the oldest communist party in India and had been one of the eight national parties in country. The C.P.I was founded in Kanpur on 26 December 1925.

C.P.I (M)-

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is a communist political party in India. It is one of the national parties of India. The party emerged from split from the Communist Party of India on 7 November, 1964.

C.P.I (M.L)-

The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation (abbreviated CPI-ML(L) or CPIML Liberation), also referred to as the Liberation group, is a communist political party in India.

Ram Rajya Parishad-

Akil Bharatiya Ram Rajya Parishad was an Indian Hindu nationalist political party founded by Swami Karpatri in 1948. The RRP won three Lok Sabha seats in the 1952 elections in the national Parliament and two in 1962.

The Rastriya Janamorcha-

Rastriya Janamorcha is a political party in Nepal. It was originally founded in 1995 as the legal front of Communist Party of Nepal. Former Deputy Prime Minister, Chitra Bahadur K.C is the chairman of the party. The 1950 India-Nepal Treaty of peace and friendship is a bilateral treaty between Nepal and India establish a close strategic relationship between the two soth Asian neighbours.

Jayaprakash Narayan-

Jayaprakash Narayan, popularly referred to as JP or Lok Nayak, was an Indian Independence activist, theorist, socialist and political leader. He is remembered for his leadership during for his opposition against the them Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, for her over throw. He had called for a ‘ total revolution’.

Rajib Gandhi-

Rajib Ratna Gandhi was an Indian politician who served as the sixth prime minister of India from 1984 to 1989. He took office after the 1984 assassination of his mother, then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, to become the youngest Indian prime minister at the age of 40.

The 52nd Amendment-

An amendment sought to limit frequent defections in India. In 1985, Tenth Schedule of the 52nd amendment to the Constitution of India was passed by the Parliament of India to achieve this.

Henry Austin-

Henri Austin was an Indian politician, diplomat, and former state and federal government minister. He was also a veteran leader in the Indian National Congress Party. Austin was born on 20 October 1920.

Swatantra Party-

The Swatantra Party was an Indian Classical liberal political party, that existed from 1959 to 1974. It was founded by C. Rajagopalachari in reaction to what he felt was the Jawaharlal Nehru- dominated Indian National Congress’s increasingly socialist and statist outlook.

United Socialist Party-

Samyukta Socialist Party (translation: United Socialist Party, SSP), was a political party in India from 1964 to 1972. SSP was formed through a split in the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) in 1964.

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