

Origin of Regionalism in Indian Political Party Culture

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Abstract: Modern democracy is indirectly representative; in the modern state a large number of people cannot directly participate in governance. Political parties play a particularly liberal democracy. Democracy is run by the people, but in a large modern state it is impossible to directly participate in governing, so the people indirectly govern through their elected representatives. According to Alan Ball1, the work of political parties— “uniting, simplifying and stabilising the political process”.

Keywords: Decentralization, Regionalism, Democratic Party System, Democracy, Development, Multiculturalism, Coalition politics, Modernization, Community Politics.

Introduction-

The emergence and existence of regional political parties is not a new phenomenon in Indian politics. After the first general election in 1952, the Election Commission² declared nineteen political parties as regional parties, presently there are more than forty recognized regional political parties. Regional political parties have become an integral part of the political system of modern India. Regional political parties have played an important role in local and state politics as well as in national politics at present. It is well-established that regional parties have the capacity to form and run permanent governments in the states. According to recent experience, the help and cooperation of regional political parties is essential for the formation and operation of the national government in Delhi. Local and regional political parties have played an important role in the country's political system in the 1950s since India's independence. In many cases the national political parties have not been able to ignore regional parties and joined hands with the regional parties to ensure political victory.

- Local and regional political parties have important role in the political system of the country since independence. In many cases national political parties have not been able to ignore these regional parties, joining hands with regional parties as needed to ensure political victory. In 1952, the Congress Government was formed in the state of Madras in collaboration with members of the Muslim League in Malwar region. From the 1960s onwards, regional political parties began to play a more widespread role in Indian politics. The emergence and development of several regional groups was observed at this time, mainly in the context of ethnic upheaval. Examples in this regard are Akali Dal³, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha⁴, Assam Gana Parisad⁵, D.M.K⁶, A.I.D.M.K⁷ etc. On the basis of all these groups the traditional role of religion, language, caste, gender etc, is undeniable.

- The causal relationship behind any event that takes place within the existing political system is present. There are many different reasons behind the emergence of regional political parties in the Indian political system. The explanation- analysis of these factors is very relevant in the present situation.

- For a long time after independence, the Congress party had the sole authority in national and regional politics. Towards the end of twentieth century, the dominance and prestige of the Congress party began to wane. This created such a political vacuum in different part of India. Such a situation paved the way for the emergence and development of regional political parties.

- All the administrative policies and decisions development plans are taken at the national level. The people of different parts of India cannot be satisfied with the decisions and plans taken at the national level. They people do not see the possibility of resolving their grievances or resolving regional issues. They consider their regional issues and interests separately and think of separate ways to solve them. At the regional level, regional political party have sprung up in different part of India cantering on the ideas and consciousness of all these people. For example the D.M.K, A.I.D.M.K in Tamil Nadu , the National Conference in Jammu & Kashmir, Kanti Rang in Karnataka and other regional parties. S.K Sikri commented on the book ‘ Indian Government and Politics’ that “ In Andhra Pradesh, the Telugu people revolted against the cavalier treatment meted out to their local leadership by Delhi bigwigs and this helped them to instal a regional party in power”.

- Violent ethnic, communal or religious allegiance is present in India. On the basis of this, regional parties are emerging in some place. Among the communal parties Hindu Mahasabha⁹, Ram Rajya Parisad, Shiromani Akali Dal, Muslim League, Telugu Desam¹⁰, etc. are notable. These groups are trying to prove the superiority of their respective races, religious and community and protect their interests.

- In some states of India, regional parties have also been formed on the basis of linguistic claims. South India has most linguistic unity and diversity, and it is from this South India that the various linguistic regional groups of India originated. Among the regional parties based on language are D.M.K, A.I.D.M.K of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh Telangana Proja Samiti of Andhra Pradesh, Gorkha Leauge and Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha of West Bengal etc.
- In many cases, regional party are formed on the basis of the initiative of one or a few leaders. Such regional parties are usually not long lasting. The death of that prominent leader or the infighting within a local group led to the extinction of such regional parties. Examples include the West Bengal Workers' Party and The Marxist Forward Block.
- Tensions in Indian politics have often led to unrest and insurgency, with some foreign powers seeking to jeopardize India's unity and solidarity. To this end, they fuel India's separatist forces in various ways. In this formula, various regional parties were formed. The validity of this argument is proved by the fact that the events in the North-East of India and the separatist events in Punjab.
- In many cases, regional parties have emerged on the basis of the consciousness of the minorities and their zeal for the interests of the minority. Examples include the Muslim League, The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, The Kuki National Council in Mnipur, and The Tripura Tribal Youth Association. These small regional groups have been formed in different part of India and the development of separatism became powerful in different parts of India.
- The structure of most political parties in India is not genuinely democratic. There is also a strong lack of a federal mentality among these regional parties. This led to inter-party quarrels and break-ups within the party. This is one of the reasons why regularly new regional groups have emerged. The political parties to emerge from the Congress are the Congress for Democracy, the Congress (G), the Nationalist Congress and the Trinamool Congress 11. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and its regional political rival All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) have been the major players among the Dravidian parties since the mid-1960s. Since the 1967 legislative assembly elections, only the DMK and the AIADMK have formed governments in Tamil Nadu. In this context S.L. Sikri has commented that – ‘.....Indira Gandhi, in her efforts to establish dynastic rule, destroyed the Congress to its grass roots, she excluded all those groups in the Congress which refused to accept her hegemony and clamoured for political participation. Other national parties also failed to have grass roots in the national sense. This situation helped the emergence and consolidation of regional parties’.
- The expulsion of a prominent leader of a major national party may also result in the formation of a regional party. A new regional party was formed with the initiative of the expelled leader of the big party. As a result of ideological conflicts or personal interests between the party and those big leaders, they often come out of the big national party and form a new party. Examples include the expelled leader Ajay Mukherjee and Sushil Dhara's Bangla Congress 12 .
- Regional parties formulate policies and plans based on the demands and interests of the local people. As a result these parties can exert influence among the people of the state and earn the loyalty of the people. National parties try to use that regional feeling for their own interests. In Punjab, all parties right and left want to come to an electoral agreement with the Akali Dal. In Kerala, Congress(E), C.P.I (M) or C.P.I can not form government without the support of regional parties. Due to this real and political importance of regional parties, there has been tendency among some groups in different parts of India to form regional parties.
- According to many sociologists, nationalism developed in India on the eve of the freedom struggle against the British rule. The nationalist movement against the exploitation of colonial rule helped to develop nationalist ideas among Indians. After independence, the nationalist ideology among the people of India came to an end. During this time the regionalist consciousness or the plaintiff consciousness of the tribes developed and spread. This created favourable conditions for the emergence of regional political parties.
- The last decade of the twentieth century saw a new trend Indian politics. This is the tendency of political alliances and coalition government. Since then, no all-India political party has been able to secure a single absolute majority in the Loke Sabha 13. National political parties are forced to rely on the help and cooperation of regional political parties to ensure success in the Loke Sabha elections.
- In some case in the post-election periods the national party had to form alliances with various regional parties to form a government. In the 13th Loke Sabha elections, The Bharatiya Janata Party (B.J.P) 14 formed the National Democratic Alliance (N.D.A) 15, published an election manifesto and participated in the election contest. The partners of this morcha are D.M.K, P.M.K, Shiv Sena, Akali Dal. Lok Dal, Janata Dal etc. At that time Trinamool Congress and Telugu Desam Party did not join the N.D.A alliance but secured seats with B.J.P. On the other hand A.I.D.M.K and Rastriya Janata Dal (R.J.D)16 formed an electoral alliance with the Congress (e) and other political parties. There had been three alliances in this election. These three alliances are the B.J.P – alliance, the Congress – alliance and the left alliance. The B.J.P won 182 Loke Sabha seats in this election and formed an alliance with its allies and allied regional parties. Such political alliances and the trend of coalition governments helped in the development and expansion of regional political parties in the Indian political system. This has led to the development of regional parties. The

centralization of power among national political parties, authoritarian leadership, dictatorial authority, and the attitude of ignoring the grievance of regional leaders paved the way for the emergence of regional political parties.

There is a great deal of disagreement among political thinkers as to whether the existence of a regional political party is conducive to the interests of the Indian political system. According to many, the emergence and prosperity of regional political parties in different states of India is a threat to India's democratic integrity and national unity. Again, many have the opposite view. In the opinion of this second class of thinkers, the creation and prosperity of regional political parties is justified in view of the prosperity of the Indian federal system, the concept of decentralization of power, the more distinct cultural and linguistic identity of the states, etc. Regionalism is a curse on democracy is also the view of many thinker. Regional political parties are often accused of narrow-mindedness, each state has its own socio-economic and political problems. The regional parties take a much more communal approach to solving all these problems and want to move towards communalism. Critics cite the role of the Akali Dal in Punjab as an example. There is a danger that the progress of the state will be hampered under the rule of regional parties. These political parties do not have the vision to formulate and implement development plans for the future. Political parties need to expand their vision for the betterment of the state and its people by eliminating narrow party interests. But in this case the limitations of the political parties cannot be denied. Regional political parties are overly loyal to regional sentiments, and they use this loyalty as their political key. As a result, regionalism increases narrow interests of the region. The greater interests of the country and its people are thus harmed. Regional political parties cannot rise above regional allegiance and pursue the greater wellbeing of the nation. Initiatives of regional political parties in the interest of the region often go against the overall interests of India and the Indians.

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4. Johan Zavos (2004) The Politics of Cultural Mobilization in India, New Delhi Oxford University Press.
5. Alan Ball- Alan Ball is the author of books such as 'Modern Politics and Government', 'British Political Parties Pressure', and he was British thinker and philosopher. Published by- Macmillan Education Ltd, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hamshire and London.
6. Election Commission of India- Election Commission of India (E.C.I) is a permanent and independent body established by the constitution of India directly to ensure free and fair elections in the country.
7. Shiromani Akali Dal- Shiromani Akali Dal is a centre-right sikh-centric state political party in Punjab, India. The party is the second oldest in India, after Congress being founded in 1920.
8. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha- Jharkhand Mukti Morcha is a state political party in the state of Jharkhand which was founded by Binod Bihari Mahato . It has one seat in the 17th Loke Sabha.
9. Assam Gana Parisad (A.G.P)- Assam Gana Parisad is a regional political party in Assam, India. The A.G.P was formed after the historic Assam Accord of 1985 and formally lunched at the Golaghat Convention held from 13-14October 1985 in Golaghat, that let Prafulla Kumar Mahanta to be elected as the youngest chief minister of the state.
10. D.M.K- Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K) is a political party from South-India, which has a major influence on the state of Tamil Nadu and the union territory of Puducherry.
11. P26 A.I.A.D.M.K- All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (A.I.A.D.M.K) is an Indian regional political party, which has a major influence in the state of Tamil Nadu and union of territory of Puducherry. It is currently the main opposition party in Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly and part of the N.D.A (National Democratic Alliance).
12. S.L. Sikri ' ' Indian Government and Politics'', Culcutta Kalyani Publishers 1997, P48.
13. Hindu Mahasaha – Hindu Mahasabha is a political party in India. The organisation was formed to protect the rights of the Hindu community, after the formation of the All India Muslim League 1906, and the British India government's creation of separate Muslim electorate under the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909.
14. Telugu Deasam- Telugu Desam is a regional Indian political party active in Southern stares of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The party was founded by N.T.Rama Rao on 29 March 1982.
15. Trinamool Congress- All India Trinamool Congress is an Indian political party, which is predominantly antly active in West Bengal (W.B). The party is led by chief minister of W.B Mamata Banerjee, who the state since 2011. It was created after a division in the Indian National Congress.
16. Bangla Congress- Bangla Congress was a regional political party in the Indian state of West Bengal. It was formed through a split in the Indian National Congress in 1966 and later co-governed with the Communist Party of India (M) in two united front governments, the first lasting from March 15, 1967, to November 2, 1967, the second from 25 February 1969 to 19 March 1970.
17. Lok Sabha- Lok Sabha or House of the people, is the lower house of India's bicameral Parliament, with the upper house being the Rajya Sabha.
18. B.J.P- Bharatiya Janata Party is one of two major political parties in India, along with the Indian National Congress. It is the current ruling political party of the Republic India, since 2014. The B.J.P is a right-wing party, and its policy has historically reflected Hindu nationalist positions.
19. N.D.A- National Democratic Alliance is an Indian big tent political alliance led by the right-wing B.J.P. It was founded in 1998 and currently controls the government of India as well as the government of 17 Indian states.

20. R.J.D- Rashtriya Janata Dal (R.J.D) is an Indian political party, based in the state of Bihar and Jharkhand. The party was founded in 1977 by Lalu Prasad Yadav.
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