



A STUDY OF REGIONAL PARTIES IN NATIONAL POLITICS: THEIR ROLES IN MAKING AND DISMANTLING

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Abstract

The main focus of this research is the function of regional and state parties in national Indian politics. The research looks at the role that regional and state parties have had in establishing and overthrowing union administrations since 1989. Studying the significance of regional and state political parties in national politics should focus on the year 1989 since that is when they began to play a much larger role, which in turn caused significant changes in the Indian federal system. In this study, regional parties in national politics are attempted to be analyzed.

Keywords: Regional Parties, National Politics, Roles, Dismantling, democracy.

Introduction

In modern democracies with "representative democratic administrations," political parties function as a "link between electors and elected." The emergency rattled India's democratic system, but it was only a short setback, and the country's democracy has endured. India has staged 17 parliamentary elections and several assembly elections since independence. Nehru's understanding of India's socioeconomic and regional diversity and his view that the political framework should enable its expression were vital to India's democratic administration throughout his time in office (Ajay, Mehra, 2012). Congress' internal variety, like India's, let it avoid a centralizing trend and handle regional problems without outside support.

Jawaharlal Nehru's death strengthened Indira Gandhi politically. After she became government in 1966, key parts of the Congress party's coalitional and negotiated democracy changed. Indira Gandhi's techniques were very different from her father's. The Congress party called for fresh elections in 1967, soon after Indira Gandhi became prime minister. The economic situation worsened, prices soared, food was scarce, and there was significant public protest and mass agitation against the ruling party in 1966 (Bose, 2009), contributing to dissatisfaction, uncertainty, pessimism, and persistent, nearly repeated, agitation during the election campaign. The Congress party won the federal election, but fared poorly in state assemblies (Pai, 2013).



Research Methodology

Historical, descriptive, and analytical methods are typically used in research. A foundation of prior knowledge is required to fully comprehend the present situation. This approach is utilized to investigate the beginnings and development of regional/state political parties at the federal and state levels of government. The development of regional and state-based political parties across states has also been studied using a comparative approach. The information was collected by conducting in-depth interviews with regional political party leaders and then analyzing and incorporating their feedback and responses to a questionnaire.

Primary and secondary sources were used to compile the research's data, facts, and statistics. Data from the Election Commission of India (ECI), Lok Sabha debates, data from the CSDS Data Unit, and questionnaire responses from regional political party leaders are the key sources used. Secondary sources include printed works such as books, articles from periodicals, and research papers.

Results

1989 Lok Sabha Election-Major Shift in Party Pattern

- 1989 was the ninth Lok Sabha elections. This election focused on anti-corruption, the 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill, ethnic separatism, and community concerns. In the Bofors affair, Indian intermediaries, including the Prime Minister and his close allies, were accused of receiving inducements in a billion-dollar purchase for 155mm field cannons from Bofors. VP Singh resigned from the Congress Government.
- VP Singh founded Janata Morcha after resigning. On 11 October 1988, Singh created the Janata Dal by bringing together the parties opposing to Rajiv Gandhi's administration. He's Janata Dal president. It allied with Telugu Desam, DMK, Congress (Socialist), and Asom Gana Parishad. The CPI(M) and BJP supported the 'National Front' alliance. V.P. Singh created the National Front cabinet.
- Regional political parties fought independently on this front. These parties' electoral performance was unremarkable. National Front included TDP, DMK, and AGP. TDP won only two seats (3.29%).
- Any political party can't perform well everywhere. In Andhra Pradesh, the Congress won 39 of 43 seats, leaving only two for the TDP and CPM. In Tamil Nadu, it won 27 of 39 seats, leaving no seat for the DMK. The 9th Lok Sabha elected 27 regional party representatives.
- The 1996 election was confusing. Many political observers projected a hung parliament. All three major political organizations, Congress, BJP, and NF/LF, won the majority on their own. BJP won 161 seats, Congress (I) won 141, and the NF-LF combo won 120.



First election when all parties either lost or won.

- The 12th Lok Sabha elections showed India's volatile politics. Sumit Ganguly, "India in 1997: Another Year of Turmoil," *Asian Survey* 38, no. 2 (Feb. 1998): 126-134. Together, the BJP and INC won over 50% of the votes cast.
- That election saw the Congress's collapse, although despite its lowest vote percentage, the INC gained its seat share over 1996. Sonia Gandhi's leadership helped.
- BJP made pre-election adjustments with Samata Party, Lok Shakti Party, AIADMK, Trinamool Congress, and Biju Janata Dal and reinforced post-election alliances with TDP. Regional Parties produced distinct manifestos notwithstanding their collaboration. Regional allies had distinct organizations and manifestos.
- Congress has also benefited from NDA's shrinkage since 2004 and reliance on JD(U), Shiv Sena, SAD, and other smaller parties. BJP was isolated. In 2004, it supported 23 political parties, but in 2009, just 7.
- The two major political parties, INC and BJP, did not expand substantially from 1991 to 2009, whereas regional parties did. This suggests there is no re-nationalization of politics in the Indian union, but a tendency towards regionalization.

2014 Lok Sabha Elections and the Shrinking Role of the Regional Political Parties

- The 2014 Lok Sabha elections saw a substantial departure in the 20-year-old pattern of electoral rulings. Although BJP won this election and constituted the government alone, the NDA partnership was retained.
- Most regional and state parties lost ground from previous elections. Despite maintaining 212 seats and a comparable vote share (46.6% vs. 46.7%), this election exhibited substantial difference across regional parties.
- Five regional parties got over 3% of the vote. Except for the three regional parties led by Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal, Jayalalitha in Tamil Nadu, and Biju Patnaik in Orissa, none could make their presence felt in this election.



Table 1: Regional / State Parties with their vote share and seats won in the General Elections of 2009 and 2014

Party Name	2009		2014	
	Vote Share (%)	Seats Won	Vote Share (%)	Seats Won
Trinamool congress	31.21	19	38.41	34
CPI (M)	32.11	9	22.71	2
BJD	37.24	14	44.77	20
AIADMK	22.91	9	44.45	37
DMK	25.12	18	23.64	0
TDP	25.02	6	29.36	16
TRS	6.16	2	14.03	11
YSR Congress	0.00	0	28.94	9
SP	17.30	23	22.35	5
BSP	27.42	23	19.63	0
SHS	17.01	11	22.82	18
NCP	19.28	8	15.04	4
JD(U)	17.79	20	16.04	2
RJD	20.13	4	15.46	4
LJP	6.55	0	6.50	6
SAD	33.85	4	26.37	4



- Regional parties sought to recover late in 2018. KC Rao of TRS from Telangana, Mamata Banerjee of Trinamool Congress from West Bengal, Chandrababu Naidu of TDP from Andhra Pradesh, Akhilesh Yadav of SP and Mayawati of BSP from UP led these efforts.
- This was an attempt to combine regional parties opposing the NDA in the upcoming Lok Sabha election. The politicians championed a Federal Front independent of the BJP and Congress, but it couldn't fight the BJP in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.
- TDP lost 3 seats. N Chandrababu Naidu's TDP partnered with the BJP in 2014, when the NDA had 17 members. The Biju Janata Dal's Lok Sabha tally fell from 20 to 12 in 2019.
- SP and BSP joined forces to halt BJP's victory march. These two parties ruled Uttar Pradesh for 20 years till the BJP took it in 2017.

Conclusion

This paper traces the rise of regional parties in light of these views. Contrary to certain research on party system development in India, there is no consistent pattern of regionalization across states; distinct areas have their own trajectory. This study assumes incentives vary over time. Since 1989, regional and state parties have been prominent in national politics. In 1989, the period of Congress hegemony ended and regional parties played a vital role in Indian politics. This tendency looks to be turning following 2014 Lok Sabha elections, when BJP obtained a majority.



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