Political Party and Women in Politics

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The Emergence and Shaping of Indian Politics

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Introduction

India's politics are conducted within the bounds of its Constitution. Even after colonial government was withdrawn on August 15, 1947, political liberalism, particularly of the British persuasion, continued to be a powerful intellectual force, independent of the political system. At a pivotal moment in India's history, when the administration the British left behind was valuable to the country's new ruling power, it was maybe the only choice open to the nationalists. Therefore, the nationalists made an ideological decision that essentially eliminated the possibility of finding an alternative, possibly as a result of the pressing circumstances. Nationalism, democracy, and colonialism appear to have been the three main ideological influences on Indian politics. Therefore, even after decolonization, understanding Indian politics requires an understanding of the colonial, nationalist, and democratic articulation of the political. In the present chapter, the researcher has tried to delve deep into the emergence and the shaping of Indian Politics. The Indian party system has undergone at least four changes. The Congress party dominated other parties in the first-party system (1952–1967). In several states, opposition to the Congress party emerged during the following phase, which led to the polarization of state party systems (1967–89). The third stage saw the emergence of the post-Congress polity, a competitive multiparty system that lasted from 1989 to 2014 and in which the Congress lost its position as the main national player. The creation of the BJP as a single-party majority in 2014 marked the beginning of the current party system.

India's politics are conducted within the bounds of its Constitution. India is a parliamentary secular democratic republic where the prime minister leads the government and the president serves as both the head of state and the nation's first citizen. Despite the fact that the word is not included in the Constitution itself, it is founded on the federal system of government. India has a dual polity structure, or a federal one, with the central government at the centre and the states on the perimeter. The Constitution establishes the organizational boundaries and authorities of the federal and state governments. It is widely accepted, adaptable, and regarded as final, meaning that national laws must abide by it.

The Emergence of Indian Political System

India achieved its independence in 1947 through a process referred to as the transfer of power. However, a lot of what we observe in an independent India can be linked to various legacies. Another viewpoint is that because colonialism lasted for so long, its effects appear to have become ingrained in India's society, economy, and politics. Therefore, it was nearly difficult for those who controlled India's fate in the early stages of her independence to entirely abolish the prevailing political structure, which was essential to the British Raj. Even after colonial government was withdrawn on August 15, 1947, political liberalism, particularly of the British persuasion, continued to be a powerful intellectual force, independent of the political system. Even though Nehru excitedly declared that a new age had arrived when the soul of a nation finds utterance, the vocabulary had barely altered due to its articulation in the style of classical liberalism. The colonial administration effectively addressed the intercommunal violence that erupted in Bengal and Punjab after the British declared independence. Those who stayed outside the Congress fold opposed the continuation of the colonial system of governance, but Nehru and his colleagues may not have had an other choice. At a pivotal moment in India's history, when the administration the British left behind was valuable to the country's new ruling power, it was maybe the only choice open to the nationalists. Therefore, the nationalists made an ideological decision that essentially eliminated the possibility of finding an alternative, possibly as a result of the pressing circumstances. Nationalism, democracy, and colonialism appear to have been the three main ideological influences on Indian politics. Therefore, even after decolonization, understanding Indian politics requires an understanding of the colonial, nationalist, and democratic articulation of the political. It is important to remember two things. First of all, despite the fact that nationalism and colonialism are unquestionably at odds with one another, there is no denying that colonialism facilitated the conditions for nationalism to develop as a potent ideology that helped the colonized express their views. Furthermore, colonization facilitated a steady process of democratization by progressively integrating individuals who harbored positive views towards the foreign government. Carefully chosen Indian interests were granted some degree of representation by the colonial state. There is no denying that colonial practices are the source of the governance habits of the post-colonial state in India. Furthermore, its "two-track tradition" of protest and participation, as well as the rule of law, bureaucracy, citizenship, parasitic landlords, and contemporary political institutions, are all rooted in "the mixed legacies of colonial rule. Ashis Nandy referred to colonialism as an intimate enemy because the dominated perceived the virtues of being dominated as a means of advancing their own interests. These two factors, combined with colonialism's ability to adapt to shifting sociopolitical conditions, account for the relative stability of colonialism in India.

In contrast to other democracies, India has experienced a high number of political parties throughout its democratic history. It is estimated that following India's independence in 1947, more than 200 parties were founded. Additionally, according to the Election Commission of India's current publication report dated December 23, 2021, there were 2858 registered parties nationwide, including 9 national parties, 54 state parties, and 2796 unrecognized parties operating in the nation.

The Shaping of the Party System in India

While political parties do have their own internal structures, party systems are contain them. Since they are elements or parts of the system, modifications to the system will inevitably have an impact on the elements. It is widely acknowledged that since its inception, the Indian party system has undergone at least four changes. The Congress party dominated other parties in the first-party system (1952–1967), winning both nationally and in the majority of states, earning it the infamous moniker Congress system. In several states, opposition to the Congress party emerged during the following phase, which led to the polarization of state party systems (1967–89). The non-Congress opposition parties began to gain a greater percentage of seats and vote shares while the Congress kept winning on a national level.

The third stage saw the emergence of the post-Congress polity, a competitive multiparty system that lasted from 1989 to 2014 and in which the Congress lost its position as the main national player. Since no party could win a majority on its own during this time, coalition governments were formed at the federal level. During this phase, state-based parties gained more clout in the states and at the federal level. The creation of the BJP as a single-party majority in 2014 marked the beginning of the current party system. It was evident that India had entered the second phase of its second-dominant party system, centered around the BJP, given the party's two consecutive victories in 2019 and growing influence. It appears that the median has moved so far to the right that the opposition has become either colorblind or silent in terms of strategy and tactics.

The Kinds of Party Systems in the World

There are three kinds of party systems in the world:

➤ **The One-party System:** The one-party system in which only one-party rules and no opposition party is permitted. The Soviet Union was an example of one-party system.

➤ **The Two-party System:** Two-party system on which two major parties exist. For example, the Republicans and the Democrats in the United States.

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While political parties do have their own internal structures, party systems also contain them. Since they are elements or parts of the system, modifications to the system will inevitably have an impact on the elements. It is widely acknowledged that since its inception, the Indian party system has undergone at least four changes. The Congress party dominated other parties in the first-party system (1952–1967), winning both nationally and in the majority of states, earning it the infamous moniker Congress system. In several states, opposition to the Congress party emerged during the following phase, which led to the polarization of state party systems (1967–89). The non-Congress opposition parties began to gain a greater percentage of seats and vote shares while the Congress kept winning on a national level.

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➤ **The Multi-party System:** Multi-party system on which there are a number of political parties lead to the formation of coalition governments. India, France and Switzerland are examples of multi-party systems.

Types of Political Parties

Political parties are organized voluntary associations or groups of people with similar political beliefs who aim to advance national interests and seek to seize power through constitutional means.

Today's democratic states have four different kinds of political parties.

➤ **Conservative Parties:** Conservative parties that believe in status-quo.

➤ **Liberal Parties:** Liberal parties committed to transforming and reforming the current structures.

➤ **Radical Parties:** Radical parties that seek to topple the current institutions in order to establish a new one.

➤ **Reactionary Parties:** Parties that support the outdated political and socio-economic structures are known as reactionary.

Ideologies are also used to categorize political parties. Political scientists have positioned conservative and reactionary parties on the right, liberal and radical parties in the centre, and radical parties on the left. In India, CPI and CPM are examples of leftist parties, Congress of centrist parties and the BJP is an example of rightist parties.

The General attributes of Modern Indian Political Thought

The general attributes of contemporary Indian political thought are listed below:

➤ **Considering the Diversity of India:** The diversity of India was also represented in the ideas of contemporary Indian political theorists. They represented a variety of backgrounds (caste, language, region, etc.) and used their opinions to share their personal experiences. The primary goal for the Indian populace, who had been a sophisticated civilization prior to the arrival of colonialism, was to overthrow and subdue the foreign overlords. As a result, an anti-colonial nationalism emerged, which is still the basis of contemporary Indian political theory even though it was developed and organized differently by various intellectuals at different times.

➤ **Interested in Pre-British Political Thought:** Contemporary Indian political scholars were also obliged to interact with the rich and varied body of pre-British political thought. The foundation of contemporary Indian political philosophy is the country's ancient civilization and its

ability to accept ideas and elements from other countries that were introduced through numerous invasions.

Practical Perspective: In contrast to their Western counterparts, such as Hegel, T. H. Green, and John Locke, the majority of contemporary Indian political philosophers were not systemic political philosophers. They were more of social and political activists who either actively opposed the British or actively engaged them in conversation in an effort to change their society. As a result, no significant political treatises such as Zia Barani's Fatwa-i-Jahanadari or Kautilya's Artha Shastra were written during this time.

The impact of global events: World events at that time also had an impact on contemporary Indian political philosophers. They were influenced by the rise of nationalism in Europe, which was demonstrated by events such as the unification of Germany under Bismarck and the unification of Italy known as the risorgimento, or rebirth in Italian. An important part of the unification of Italy was played by Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi. Savarkar, Nehru, and Gandhi were impacted by Mazzini's theories. The defeat of Russia in 1905 by Japan, an Asian power, was another global event that motivated Indian freedom fighters. Gandhi and Nehru thought that Asians would develop self-respect and the conviction that they could overcome European powers as a result of Japan's victory. The leaders of India were more determined to oppose the British in the 1920s as a result of the Irish people's successful resistance movement. Anti-colonial movements in Asia and Africa were sparked by the 1916 Easter Uprising in Ireland against the British. In 1916, V V Giri, who would go on to become President of India, was studying in Ireland. He subsequently claimed to have felt a total sense of identification with the Irish cause. The Irish Home Rule Movement served as an inspiration for the Indian Home Rule Movement. While the Quit India movement was started during the Second World War, the Non-Cooperation movement and the Khilafat movements originated in India during the First World War. The interwar Great Depression revealed the economic susceptibility of the colonial powers, including the British. The American, French, and Russian revolutions are among the other significant world events that influenced contemporary Indian political philosophers. While the French Revolution popularized the concepts of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the American Revolution demonstrated to the world that it was possible to challenge and ultimately defeat British power. Socialist and communist ideologies from the Russian Revolution drew many workers to the Indian freedom movement. After India gained independence, the constitution included many of these concepts.

India's requirement for a political party

Any political party, in fact, has obligations to society in addition to its own. They are chosen by their fellow citizens and serve as the cornerstones of any democracy. They must work for the good of society if they hope to be elected. They ought to be eager to assist others. The basic divisions that occur frequently in the community are reflected in the political parties.

A political party's primary duties include the following:

➤ Contest the election.

➤ Introduce fresh programmes and policies.

➤ Introduce new legislation.

➤ The winning party establishes itself as the ruling party.

➤ They express the public's opinions.

A democratic nation cannot function without its political parties. Their responsibilities are essential to the efficient operation of a country. Ensuring that the needs of their constituents are met is primarily the responsibility of the elected representatives. In a democracy, a political party is able to establish itself and follow national laws. They are not constrained in any way. China operates under a one-party system, which might not be appropriate in any democracy.

Both the United States and the United Kingdom are two-party systems. But in one sense, India's multiparty system can be advantageous for a country as diverse and multicultural as ours.

Conclusion

The modernization of Indian tradition, the challenges of nation-formation, state formation, and economic development, as well as British colonial rule, were the driving forces behind the emergence of modern political thought in India. The diversity of India is reflected in modern Indian political thought, which was perceived more as a body of practical knowledge than a theory. The roots of mediaeval and ancient Indian thought are also explored in contemporary Indian political philosophy. It was composed of liberal reformers, conservatives, humanists, social justice advocates, opponents of the caste system, socialists, proponents of gender equality, Islamic thought, and political ideologies of Gandhi and Nehru. Given that the majority of India's leadership was composed of elites, modern Indian political thought tended to be elitist, and there were few attempts to develop and create a syncretic character in the ideas of humanists like Tagore and Vivekananda as well as Gandhi. The intricate interaction of three elements—Hindu and Muslim nationalism, British social engineering of divide and rule—guaranteed India's partition in 1947, an event that still has repercussions in the politics of South Asian states today.

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