

**Bachelor of Arts
(BA – Political Science – II)**

**Political Process in India
(DBAPC0203T24)**

**Self-Learning Material
(SEM II)**



**Jaipur National University
Centre for Distance and Online Education**

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Course Introduction

Welcome to "Political Process in India." This course offers a comprehensive exploration of the dynamic and multifaceted political landscape of India, the world's largest democracy. We will delve into the historical evolution, institutional structures, key political actors, and contemporary issues that shape Indian politics. The course will also address critical issues such as caste, religion, regionalism, and gender, analyzing how these factors influence political behavior and public policy.

Political Process in India is assigned 4 credits and contains 5 units. Each unit is divided into sections and sub-sections. Each unit begins with statement of objectives to indicate what we expect you to achieve through the unit. There are several assignments in each unit which you must attempt.

Course Outcomes

After studying this course, a student will be able to:

1. Understand the origin, development, and types of political parties.
2. Analyze the role of political parties in a democratic system
3. Examine the nature and types of pressure groups
4. Evaluate the role of pressure groups in a democratic society and their impact on political decision-making.
5. Explore the factors influencing voting behavior in India.
6. Assess the impact of socio-economic, cultural, and regional factors on voting choices.
7. Study the relationship between religion and politics in historical and contemporary contexts.
8. Analyze the impact of caste-based movements and political parties on the electoral process.

We hope you will enjoy the course.

Acknowledgement

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UNIT : 1

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE PARTY SYSTEM

Objectives

- Distinguish between systems that are single-, two-, and multi-party;
- Examine the many stages of the Indian party system
- Describe shortcomings of system

1.1 Introduction

Any political system's dynamics depend heavily on political parties, but democracies especially depend on them, because they are essential for upholding democratic values. Organizational structures, leadership dynamics, ideological trajectories, policy frameworks, bases of support, and tactics for garnering support are just a few of the traits these parties display. A political landscape's party system indicates the quantity of political entities and the kinds of coalitions they create before and after elections, as well as during the creation of governments.

The current Indian party system has its origins in the country's liberation war. Political parties had a crucial role in the national struggle at first, mainly in achieving independence. But after independence, their goals changed to become political leaders and establish administrations. After 1989, the multi-party system and center-left coalition governments became more prominent. The political party system and its terrain in India have been significantly influenced by a number of elements, including social dynamics, caste connections, ethnic backgrounds, community identities, and religious pluralism. The political landscape has also been significantly shaped by the nationalist movement's traditions, various party leadership philosophies, and opposing ideological stances.

Both at the federal and state levels, parliamentary government is enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Since citizens participate in elections to elect members of the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha, the political parties running in these elections are essential to the nation's political structure. Consequently, the party system

1.2 Types of Party System

There are principally three categories of Party system:

One Party System

A single political party has complete control over administration under a one-party system, sometimes referred to as a single-party system, and there is no opposition. Historically, monarchies gave rise to this authoritarian system, which subsequently took the form of dictatorships. Although they do still exist in a few democratic countries, these regimes typically use elections as a stage to demonstrate apparent popular support, giving voters little options that are typically confined to one candidate.

Enforcing obedience and discipline among citizens is the main goal of the one-party system, not seeking input from the whole voter on matters impacting society. Totalitarianism, in which the ruling party or leader exercises entire control and restricts democratic rights including freedom of speech, expression, the press, and association, is frequently associated with one-party governance. Notably, opposition is almost nonexistent under such regimes, regardless of whether it takes the shape of political parties or dissenting voices.

One well-known example of a nation with a one-party system is China, where the Communist Party is the only entity in charge of politics and government.

Two-Party System

A two-party system is defined by the dominance of two political parties that receive a sizable portion of the vote from the voters in spite of the existence of other parties. These parties usually take turns acting as the opposition and the ruling party, respectively. The allocation of power is determined by the party that wins majority representation in elections. Two-party systems are found in the United States and the United Kingdom, for example Fig 1.1.

The two main political parties in the US are the Democratic and Republican parties, and they are both fighting for control of the government and electoral victories. Comparably, the Labour Party and the Conservative Party are the two main political forces in the UK, vying for public support and power.

Multi-Party System

A multi-party system is a political framework that includes multiple political parties. India and many European countries have multi-party systems in place. In a system like this, a number of parties frequently work together to establish a coalition government, deciding on a shared minimum agenda to rule together.

There are two primary types of multi-party systems: unstable and functional. Stability is elusive and government may be characterized by periodic upheavals and uncertainties under an unstable multi-party system. This kind of instability was particularly prevalent in India between 1996 and 1998. On the other hand, under a functioning multi-party system, the government functions more like a two-party system even though there are more political parties involved. This provides a certain level of stability. This stability is attained by productive collaboration.

One major flaw in this structure is that members of the Council of Ministers tend to seek direction from their respective party leaders rather than from the Prime Minister. Furthermore, by threatening to withhold support, even a single member of parliament may try to exert excessive influence over the government. So with this kind of party system, volatility in the administration becomes a major problem.

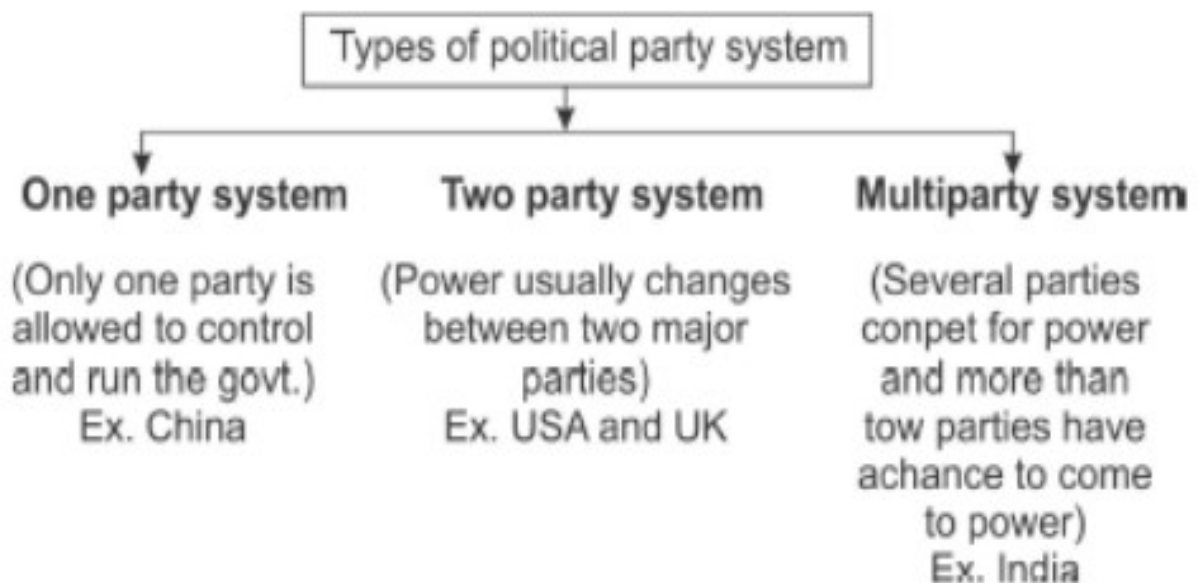


Fig 1.1 Party system in India

1.3 Different Phases of Party System In India

India's party structure changed over time, going from the Congress's hegemony as a single party to the emergence of other parties. The various system phases are covered in the section that follows:

Congress dominance era (one-party dominance vs. Multiple parties)

India's political environment saw the emergence of numerous political parties prior to independence. But after independence, the Indian National Congress (INC) became one of the most well-known national party in the early part of the 20th century, whereas period of Janata Party was from 1977 to 1980. The Congress party was the mainstay of the Indian party system in the 1950s and 1960s when Rajni Kothari first used the phrase "one-party dominance" to characterize it. During the first four general elections, the Congress party, operating under the "Congress System," regularly won an absolute majority of seats in parliament, a position it held until 1967. The Congress's power was so great that it easily won most of the seats in nearly every election held in 1952, 1957, and 1962 to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

Though the Congress never garnered more than 48 percent of the votes in Lok Sabha elections (the highest percentage was 47.78 percent in 1957), it often won sizable majority of seats. In 1952, 1957, and 1962, for example, it secured 364 seats, 371 seats, and 361 seats. Likewise, with rare exceptions, the Congress consistently won sizable majorities in state assembly elections. The political environment was dominated by the Congress for the first three general elections, which were marked by a multiparty system up against one major party in the nation. But after the fourth General Election, this pattern changed, partly as a result of Nehru's passing and the party's subsequent divisions, undermining the Congress's hegemony within the system of parties.

There are numerous instances illustrating this shift. One notable challenge to Congress dominance occurred during the second general election in 1957, particularly in Kerala, where the Communist Party of India (CPI) emerged as a formidable opposition force. Throughout the 1960s, a diverse array of parties such as the socialist parties (BKD/BLD/LD), leftist factions, the Jana Sangha, Republican Party of India, DK, and others across various states posed significant challenges to Congress's hegemony as a single-party system. These parties

mobilized public support around social, economic, and political issues, leading to the Congress's defeat in eight states and the formation of non-Congress governments.

This marked the end of Congress's unchallenged dominance, both at the national level and in most states, which it had enjoyed concurrently. However, despite this setback, the Congress party did not experience a complete erosion of its support base. It continued to enjoy substantial support in several states and at the center on numerous occasions. Nevertheless, it ceased to maintain its status as the sole dominant party after the 1960s.

1.4 Breakdown of Congress System and Emergence of the Non Congress Parties (1967-1989)

The political landscape of India changed with the fourth general election in 1967. The shift was demonstrated by the diminishing power of the Congress party in both Lok Sabha and assembly elections, the rise of leaders and regional parties in multiple states. In addition to opposing the Congress's hegemony, the regional parties and their leaders spoke for the goals and interests of various communities and areas. The leaders and parties that spoke for rural villages and the lower classes offered the biggest obstacle.

In northern India, particularly in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, parties led by Charan Singh, under various names such as BKD, BLD, or LD, along with socialist factions, emerged as viable alternatives to the Congress. These parties prioritized issues affecting farming communities and backward classes. Examples of their distinct agendas included the introduction of reservations for backward classes in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh during the 1970s, as well as the establishment of the Mandal Commission aimed at implementing reservations for backward classes in central government institutions. From 1967 to 1989, the bipolarization of political parties within states became a prominent characteristic of the political landscape.

In states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Delhi, the competition primarily revolved around the Congress and the BJS/BJP. Conversely, in Kerala, Tripura, and West Bengal, the main contenders were the Congress and leftist parties. In Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, and Goa, alliances led by the Congress or regional parties emerged, although the BJP also made significant gains. In the North-Eastern states, competition mainly ensued between the Congress and various regional parties or their alliances. In Tamil Nadu, the main rivalry existed between the DMK and the AIADMK.

In addition, there was the Congress split in 1969, the public institutions' decline in credibility under Indira Gandhi's administrations, the Jayaprakash Narayan-led student movement in 1974, and the declaration of emergency from 1975 to 1977 contributed to the Congress's collapse. The Janata Party presented the Congress with a central challenge for the first time. It was the Congress's downfall. On the eve of the 1977 general election, five parties merged to establish the Janata Party. The Congress's loss in this election was seen as the start of a new chapter in the history of the party system.

Nonetheless, the Congress did have a brief period of prominence in the 1980s following the fall of the Janata Party. The height of Congress's popularity came with its 1984 win. parliamentary election following the death of Indira Gandhi.

However, within a few years of Rajiv Gandhi's government coming into power, it encountered numerous challenges. These challenges encompassed the agitation for the construction of a temple at Ayodhya, spearheaded by a former minister in the Rajiv Gandhi government, V.P. Singh, and allegations of corruption regarding the purchase of guns from Bofors. Given that the government was led by a Congress leader, these challenges had a detrimental impact on the Congress party. Additionally, certain traditional supporters of the Congress, such as Dalits and other marginalized communities, threw their support behind the newly formed BSP (established in 1984).

After the Congress party lost the 1989 Lok Sabha elections, the National Front—a coalition headed by the Janata Dal—was formed, and V.P. Singh became prime minister. The Congress party has had difficulty developing a popular leadership that can balance a range of interests and fend off attacks from its enemies since the late 1980s. As a result, unlike in earlier decades, the Congress found itself dependent on partnerships to sustain its influence, even as the BJP developed as India's most powerful political party in the succeeding decades. This started India's lengthy process of forming a coalition government.

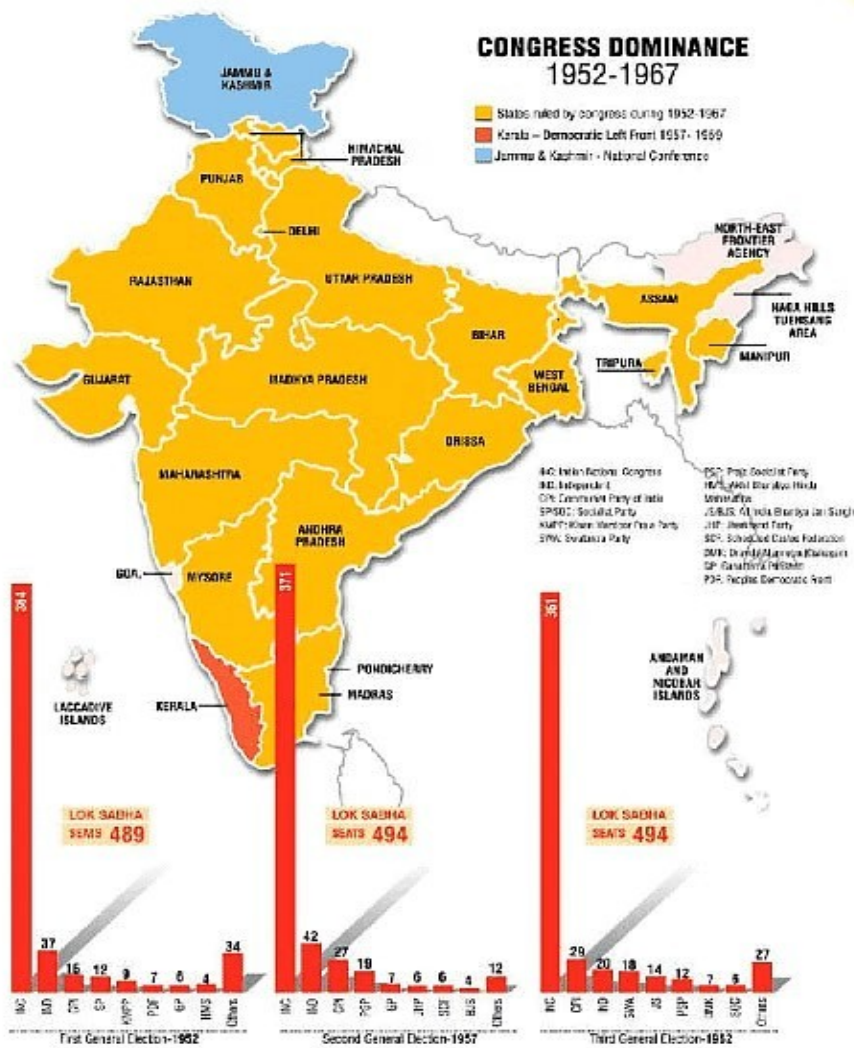


Fig 1.2 <https://edurev.in/t/255734/Era-of-One-Party-Dominance-Class-12-Political-Science>

1.5 Rise of Coalition Politics

The landscape of competitive politics has undergone significant transformations, reshaping the party system in India. The competition has transitioned from being predominantly between national parties to encompassing rivalries among alliances and coalitions comprising both national and state parties. While coalition governments at the state and central levels had been formed earlier, notably in 1969 and 1977 led by the SVD alliances and the Janata Party respectively, it was since 1989 that coalition politics became a prevailing pattern in Indian politics.

Political parties began forging pre- and post-election alliances, exemplified by the formation of the United Front in 1996, comprising 13 non-BJP parties including the Janata Dal,

Samajwadi Party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Telugu Desam Party, Asom Gana Parishad, and Left Front. The United Front administered two central governments, with H.D. Devegowda and I.K. Gujaral serving as Prime Ministers in 1996 and 1997-98 respectively.

Similarly, in 1999, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition government was formed with the BJP as its largest member. Subsequent governments formed from 1989 onwards comprised multiple parties. However, from 2004, predominantly two-poled alliances emerged at the center and in states, namely the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) led by the Congress and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the BJP.

The UPA formed two central governments with Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister from 2004-2009 and from 2009-2014. Likewise, the NDA also formed two governments with Narendra Modi as Prime Minister, from 2014-2019 and again in 2019. Additionally, there arose the Third Front, an alliance excluding members of the UPA and NDA, particularly the Congress and the BJP, although it proved less stable compared to the UPA and NDA.

Furthermore, alliances emerged in various states such as Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, and Sikkim, reflecting the proliferation of coalition politics across the nation.

When two or more political parties decide to work together, usually for a single term, to accomplish a common objective—like forming a majority government—a coalition is formed. Political parties that wish to safeguard the interests of the country together may decide to join a coalition. When one party does not hold a majority in the house, an alliance of two or more parties is required. This is a result of India's multiparty system.

Federalism is a kind of political structure in which the regions and the federal government have equal authority. The word "federalism," which originates in Latin, refers to a coalition of political forces. Federalism is a type of political structure where power is shared between two tiers of government. The Indian political system has long tolerated the formation of coalition governments.

A state refers to the lower level of government, while the central state represents the highest one. When putting plans into effect, the center must comprehend state governments and engage in negotiations with them. Temporary administrations known as coalitions are formed when numerous political groups cooperate.

The Indian political system exhibits characteristics of all three types of party systems, although its fundamental attributes differ from conventional notions. India experienced a phase of One-party dominance rather than a strict one-party system. Following this era of Congress dominance, both a two-party system and a multi-party system have emerged in India. The prevalence of the two-party system is more pronounced at the state level (in assemblies), while a multi-party system, often leading to coalition governments, is observed at the central level.

The proliferation of regional parties and their active involvement in both general and assembly elections has contributed to making political institutions more democratic and pluralistic. Consequently, various marginalized sections, social groups, and minorities now have representation through parties that advocate for their interests. While the multi-party system has enhanced transparency and inclusivity within the party system, it has also introduced instability through the formation of coalition governments. Such governments are susceptible to constant threats of withdrawal of support by coalition partners.

Despite this inherent limitation, the multi-party system has contributed to making political institutions in India more democratic and inclusive, thereby reflecting the evolving nature of Indian democracy.

1.7 Self-Assessment

1. What are the key characteristics of a multi-party system, and how does it differ from a two-party system?
 2. Explain the concept of party system in the context of a democratic political setup. How does the party system influence governance and representation?
 3. Discuss the factors that contribute to the formation of coalition governments. What are the advantages and disadvantages of coalition governments in comparison to single-party rule?
 4. How have regional parties impacted the dynamics of India's party system? Provide examples to illustrate their significance.
 5. Analyze the role of ideology in shaping political parties and their behavior within a party system. How do ideological differences contribute to political polarization or coalition building?
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UNIT : 2

PRESSURE GROUPS

Objectives:

- The pressure groups
- Types of pressure group at different parts of World
- Functions of the pressure groups

Every liberal democratic political system grants its citizens certain rights, such as the freedom of expression and political association, which allow individuals and social groupings to communicate their wants and requirements to the government. Here's a story, for example, that may or may not be real about how angry a woman called New Zealand Prime Minister Sid Holland in the middle of the night to ask for a plumber to come out and fix a leak. Holland's active intervention resulted in a plumber showing up at her house shortly after (Du Fresne, 1989). Another, unquestionably accurate tale is that in 1989, people flocked to Eastern Europe's major cities to express their deep discontent with communist authority.

Both instances demonstrate people acting in their own best interests, whether they are specific grievances or widespread doubts about the legitimacy of the administration. Put differently, individuals can participate in politics not just by casting a ballot and joining a political party, but also by belonging to a variety of associations, organizations, and clubs. Furthermore, citizen collective action has evolved into a crucial component of the articulation process and is occasionally referred to as the unofficial face of politics.

As a result, people who cooperate as formal interest groups are a valuable resource for advancing political objectives in broader political systems. A pressure group or interest group is the term used to describe this kind of collective activity. Politics is about making decisions, and interests are engaged whenever any player stands to benefit or lose from a decision. In this sense, politics and interests are inextricably linked.

Features of Pressure Groups

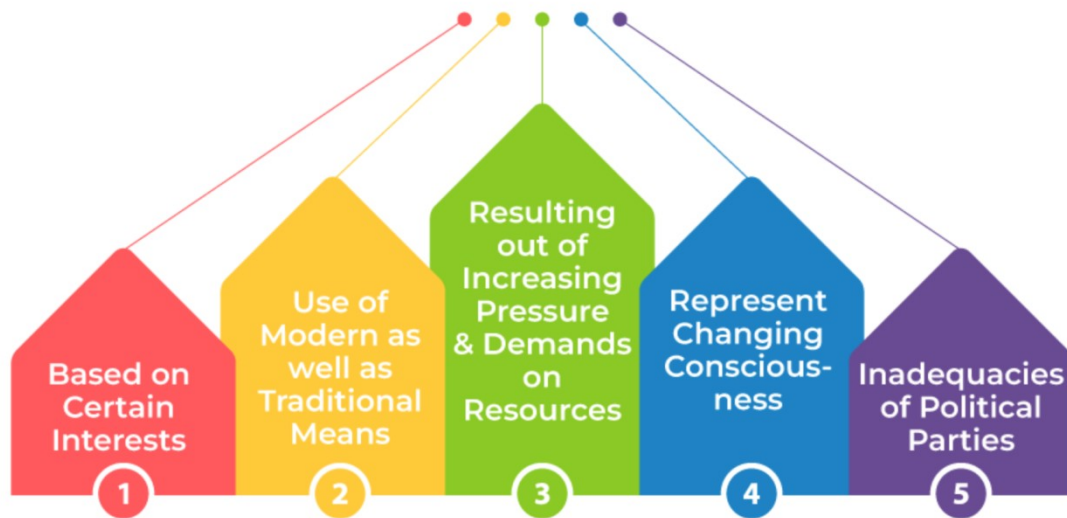


Fig 2.1: Features of a pressure group

2.1 Creation of Pressure Groups

One effect of modernity, it should be noted, is the pervasive notion that human action has the power to change the conditions of existence. It typically has to do with education, the fast urbanization of public communication, and, most of the time, improvements in living conditions. Increases in political awareness, engagement, and sense of political competence are strongly correlated with these changes. Participant attitudes like this promote the expression of more varied and citizen-based interests (ibid., p77).

Political interest is thus further amplified by the interconnectedness of contemporary life, exposure to mass media, and the broad role of government. Owing to these reasons, organized groups—also known as interest or pressure groups—became more and more prominent in early 19th-century politics, changing the patterns of political engagement. They typically outlined a more definite and unambiguous stance in line with the specific goals or ideals of the individuals they represented¹. As a result, by the end of the nineteenth century, the burgeoning trade union movement was working alongside influential farming and business groups in the majority of industrial societies (Haywood, 1997, p 252).

It has been observed that the 1950s and 1960s were seen as the height of interest in group politics, especially in western democracies. This was because these years were marked by the expansion of state activity and social change, such as industrialization.² Furthermore, as a result of these advancements, groups began posing uncomfortable queries concerning democracies' power structures. Aside from that, the government and pressure organizations have regular and personal consultations during which the groups give the government the data and expert advice it needs to make informed policy decisions. However, favored parties gained "insider" status in return, giving them the ability to have an early say in decisions (ibid).

Thus, it is asserted that a multitude of pressure groups, including professional associations, labor unions, environmentalists, and labor businesses, have been present in all contemporary societies, including those in Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and the United States.

These organizations battle with one another for members and power, all the while putting pressure on decision-makers and bureaucrats to comply with their demands, and eventually these groups became essential to the politics of their individual nations. For instance, during the 19th and 20th centuries, several pressure groups were formed in the United States.

Similar to this, there are thousands of pressure organizations in the UK and Britain, but there are relatively few political parties. As a result, pressure group membership has soared while political party membership has decreased.

A pressure group, for instance, can be as large as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), which represents 150,000 businesses, or it can be as small as the Central Area Leamington Resident's Association (CLARA), which is focused on a single local issue and represents fewer than 300 homes in its effort to protect and enhance Leamington Spa.



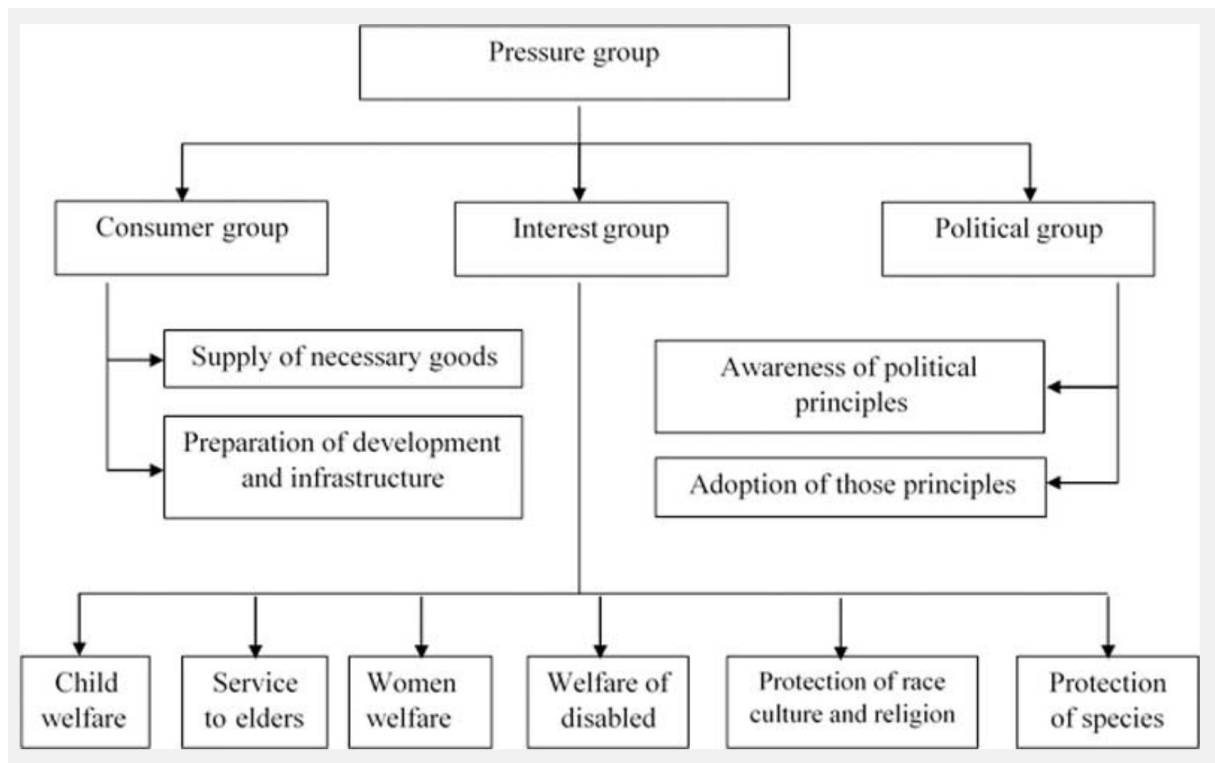
Fig 2.2: Pressure group assembled to protest against one common issue

2.2 The difference between political parties and pressure groups

Numerous academics contend that there are several differences between political parties and pressure organizations, and that they are both very different from one another. First, political parties are typically more structured and durable than pressure groups in terms of "permanence." Furthermore, pressure groups typically concentrate on a single cause or interest of a certain group, whereas parties are frequently concerned with a wide range of issues and the broader programmatic or ideological aspects associated with them.

Second, pressure groups are distinct from political parties in that their goal is external influence rather than gaining or using political power. Put differently, the objective of a pressure group is to fulfill the needs of its members, either by means of the organization itself, or by means of political pressure that leads to a particular policy outcome.

2.3 Types of Pressure Groups



2.3 Pressure Group Types

A political party aims to be elected broad attention on the topic Similar tastes. Since pressure groups come in so many different forms and dimensions, it is frequently ineffective to approach them as a single "job lot." Which categories apply to pressure groups? What distinguishes one pressure group from another? Almond and Coleman have proposed the most useful system of classification for pressure organizations, dividing them into four categories, despite the fact that there are many ways to separate them for competitive politics purposes.

1. Non-associational
2. Institutional
3. Associational
4. Anomic

2.4 Communal or Non-Associational Groups

These are the kinds of groups that aren't formed with any particular intention; rather, they're just a part of society in the sense that membership is determined by birth rather than

recruiting. These groups include, for instance, families, tribes, and those based on castes, geography, religion, and kinship. These groupings, which are at the communal end of the scale, are established on a shared heritage as well as customary ties and allegiances. These groups are now strongly involved in politics and have sway over states in developed nations. For instance, in the West, a particularly brutal war between customary groups occurred when Protestants in Northern Ireland and Italy turned against Catholics.

2.5 Institutional Groups

Groups that are a part of the government apparatus and make an effort to influence it are known as institutional groups. They consist of organizations such as the military, companies, legislatures, bureaucracy, police, and other professions. These groups have direct access to the policy-making process and can use it to express their own interests or the interests of other groups in the community. For instance, the American Medical Association (AMA) in the USA and the British Medical Association (BMA) in the UK are two examples of medical professional associations. Whether the physicians like it or not, each of these groups represents their opinions because they are mandatory for all doctors to join.

Apart from that, institutional organizations like corporate and bureaucracy frequently use their resources and unique knowledge to influence legislation in industrial democracies. According to Intense, the military-industrial complex in the United States is made up of both defense industry and Department of Defense employees who work together to support military spending. Furthermore, in autocratic regimes where independent pressure groups are either banned or regulated. Before decisions are made, institutional organizations within the government might still be able to voice their opinions. They can nevertheless, however, help with communication between the government and the populace. For example, the army might express the interests of a particular class or ethnic group (Almond, et al., 2007, p. 67).

2.6 Associational Groups

These organizations are specifically created to represent a specific group's interests. Trade unions, chambers of business, manufacturers' groups, and religious organizations fall under this category. They are sometimes referred to as functional groupings' sections, and their purpose is to safeguard their members' material interests from labor unions to doctors. They frequently have the greatest influence of all the pressure groups because they constantly want

exclusive advantages for their members and insider status with pertinent government agencies.

For instance, the members of the France Wine Growers' Association and the National Farmers' Union in Britain are professionals actively involved in a trade or industry whose interests they wish to protect. Similar to this, there is a significant mobilization of pressure organizations in ongoing discussions regarding health care in the United States, ranging from consumer advocacy groups to representatives of health insurance companies and physicians, with the goal of influencing legislation. In addition, labor unions are included in this category since they are frequently regarded as important political actors since they advocate for the majority of the working class, much like a business association does for the country's corporate interests (Ibid, p68).

2.7 Anomic Groups

Anomic groups typically arise on their own, spontaneously, when a large number of people react in a similar way to feelings of disappointment, frustration, or other powerful emotions. When a government action triggers strong emotions in people or when a fresh injustice rumor spreads throughout the community, disgruntled people may suddenly come to the streets to vent their frustration without prior planning or organization. This could result in violent reactions. Numerous affluent nations, such as the United States, France, Italy, and Britain, have reported an increased incidence of violent and impulsive anomic conduct.

2.8 The purpose and role of pressure groups

Pressure group politics, according to pluralists, is crucial to democracy since these groups serve a variety of purposes and have contributed to the advancement of the concept of pluralist democracy. In this sense, pluralist Robert Dahl holds that democracy is predicated on the idea of one person, one vote, emphasizing the individual's role in modern society's multitude of individuals, each of whom has carried one will that, taken as such, carries no weight. As a result, the only way the person may effectively express interests in this circumstance is in collaboration with others. He goes on to say that the only avenue for an individual's interests to be furthered is through pressure groups.

Thus, pressure organizations do perform a variety of responsibilities, including representation, education, political involvement, policy formation and implementation, and so on, according to pluralists, in order to maintain the balance of democracy.

2.8.1 Representation

Since political parties' primary duty is to combine interests into a cohesive political body that is able to rule the nation, it is thought that they are unable to adequately represent the whole spectrum of differing interests and viewpoints in a modern democracy. This is why pressure groups are so important to the pluralist model of democracy. Pressure organizations, on the other hand, provide specific interests and causes a voice and the ability to influence public policy.

2.8.2 Engagement in Politics

Additionally, pluralists define democracy as a form of government in which representatives are chosen through regular elections and decisions are made according to majoritarian principles, or in which political equality and freedom enable voters to effectively choose between rival candidates through secret ballots.

2.8.3 Education

Additionally, it's said that pressure groups encourage discussion, debate, and argumentation within democracies. They so produce an electorate that is more knowledgeable and well-informed. Put another way, the ability of numerous pressure groups to interact with the public and increase political consciousness within it is a major factor in how they function. As a result, they frequently invest large sums of money in doing research, running websites, offering commentary on public policy, and utilizing prominent scientists, academics, and even celebrities to share their opinions while also challenging conventional wisdom and well-established viewpoints.

2.8.4 Formulation of Policies

Despite the fact that pressure organizations are not policy-makers by definition, many of them nevertheless take part in the process. It is well known that pressure organizations in particular are an important source of information.

2.8.5 Execution of Policy

According to certain pluralist scholars, pressure organizations can have an impact on how public policy is implemented in addition to trying to influence its content. The National Farmers' Union (NFU), which collaborates with the Department for Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to implement policies pertaining to farm subsidies, disease management, animal welfare, and other related topics, is the best illustration of this.

2.9 Self-Assessment

1. What is a Pressure Group?
2. Discuss in detail about the role of Pressure group in Modern day politics of India.
3. What are different types of Pressure Group?
4. State the mechanism of formation of Pressure group.

UNIT : 3

VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN INDIA AND ITS DETERMINANTS

Objectives

- Factors that influence an individual's voting tendency
- Importance of Voting Behavior
- Defining the role of gender, caste supremacy and class distinction in Indian Voting Behavior

In India, people exercise their role under the process of Election by electing their representatives to the different legislative bodies like RajyaSabha, lokSabha and other local governance institutions like Panchayati Raj.

This chapter aims at recognizing various factors that influence an individual's voting behavior in elections.

"The study of voting behaviour invariably focuses on the determinants of why people tend to vote in public elections as they do and how they arrive at the decisions they make," states sociologist Gordon Marshall. "The Study of Voting Behaviour involves an analysis of individual psychological make-up and their relation to political action as well as institutional patterns, such as the communication process and their impact on elections," says political science professor Stephen Wasby of New York State University's Department of Political Science. Importance of Voting Practices Psephology is the scientific discipline that studies voting behaviour.

3.1 Voting Behavior

Voting Behavior denotes the pattern and trend of casting vote .There are a number of factors that influence an individual's choice of voting.

Voting behavior is just not confined to data study, number analysis or record keeping, there are a number of other factors that also play a crucial; role in decision of vote like human factors, psychological, emotional and monetary factors and a voter's personal connection with the political parties or their ideologies.

3.2 Voting Behavior in India

What variables are involved in voting? In elections, why do people support some candidates or parties over others? Are there noneconomic or economic forces at play, such as employment, inflation, and the elimination of poverty? Is it a strong, charming, etc. kind of leader? Studies on the factors influencing voting behaviour have tackled a number of these problems.

A component of election studies is an analysis of voting behavior. The field of research for elections is called psephology. Its goal is to examine inquiries concerning voters' actions during the election process.

Election studies have involved news organizations, political parties, anthropologists, sociologists, and political scientists. Election studies began in India in the 1950s, following the country's first general election in 1951–1952.

3.3 What influences Voters' Behavior ?

A number of factors, including religion, caste, class, community, ethnicity, language, ideology, political wave, etc., influence voting behavior of the citizen. Political parties make use of these factors to draw voters in order to win the race. These factors like Caste, Class, Gender, and Tribe—are employed by political party representatives to court voters, regardless of their preferences or ideology. These factors also influenced the voters' choices. Caste, Class, Gender, and Tribe are examples of voting behavior variations in India .

3.4 Role of Caste

Caste is One of the variables that has been studied the most in relation to voting behavior is caste.

Despite the fact that caste has historically been one of the best indicators of voting behavior during elections in India after independence has increased in the 1990s. The

introduction of the “Mandal Commission” by the VP Singh government, which granted OBCs reservations in central government institutions, and the emergence of political parties like the BSP, SP, and RJD in northern India are the primary causes of this. These groups have been associated with the peasant classes, dalits, or other OBCs. The Congress party, before its ascent, was a confederation of several castes. The emergence of these parties highlighted the importance of the marginalized castes having a major role in the election behavior of the country.

3.5 Role of Class

Economic issues including employment or employment allowances, price increases, land reforms, subsidies, and the elimination of poverty (garibihatao) all reflect class. remission of loans, etc. Several election campaigns have focused on these themes. For ex, the Congress used it as their catchphrase during the 1971 Lok Sabha elections, which they easily won. It is widely accepted that this slogan was the primary driver of the Congress's favorable voting pattern. During the 1950s and 1960s, political mobilization around class-based issues was one of the main issues.

The economic policies of left-wing parties in West Bengal, Kerala, and Tripura influenced the voting patterns of these voters in many elections. The 1960s saw socialist parties, in addition to that, people had been mobilized by other opposition groups on economic issues. As a result, the Congress lost the 1967 elections in eight states, and non-Congress administrations were established. Numerous caste-based regional parties are supported by that specific caste of voters. They don't prioritize going to class. In places like Delhi, class-related concerns like power discounts and In the 2020 assembly election, voters' support for the AamAdami Party was influenced by water bills. Voters rejected the BJP in the 1998 assembly election due to the scarcity of onions and their increased cost.

3.6 Role of Religion

The religious diversity of Indian society is a key aspect of the country's political landscape and has a significant impact on the power struggles between political parties. When choosing candidates, consideration is given to the existence of a majority of a certain constituency's religion. When vying for votes, the candidates don't think twice about playing the religious card with fellow believers and the secular card with followers of other faith organisations. It's also common practice to use places of worship for political purposes, especially around

election time. Political parties and other groups are once again resorting to the religionization of social-political concerns. Voters frequently base their decisions on their religious beliefs.

The creation of a secular state in India, which guarantees everyone the right to practise their religion freely and does not recognize any one religion as the official religion, has not been able to stop religion from playing a role in influencing people's voting and general political behavior. especially their actions. One of the reasons why religion continues to influence voting behavior is the existence of political parties and neo-political organizations associated with specific religions, such as the Muslim League, Akali Dal, Hindu Maha Sabha, Shiv Sena, and others.

3.7 Role of Language

India is a linguistically diverse nation where language plays a significant role in voting behavior. The organization of states based on linguistic lines underscores the importance of language in Indian politics. Issues regarding the status or quality of a particular language in a state often arise, sparking emotional responses from the populace due to their deep-seated attachment to their languages. Consequently, linguistic interests consistently impact voting patterns.

3.7 Role of Gender

Although gender is a broad notion, when we talk about gender and voting behaviour, we mostly talk about the role that women play in the voting process. Since the 1990s, plebeians, or members of marginalised groups, have been able to cast ballots in elections. has grown, encompassing women as well. Voting is a tool that empowers women by allowing them to select their representatives. The fact that many regional parties have women's concerns on their agendas underscores the importance of women's voting participation. These concerns cover a wide range of topics, including the home economy, sexual assault, dignity, legislative reservations for women, and social injustice. Regarding reservations for women in legislatures, political parties do differ. Concerns regarding women's welfare have been mentioned by a number of parties in their manifestos .

For instance, Nitish Kumar introduced an anti-alcohol policy for women's welfare in the 2015 Bihar assembly election, particularly for those from marginalised communities retrograde courses. The Cycle Yojnaprogramme of the Nitish Kumar regime, which allowed girls to

attend school, affected the voting patterns of a number of voters in a Bihar assembly election. Women's voting patterns have been influenced by Modi government initiatives like Jan Dhan Yojna and Beti Padhao Beti Bachao in a number of Indian elections since 2014. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, three major issues—development, secularism, and governance—became focal points of discussion for voters.

The core of the broad problems were women's safety, the inclusive growth strategy, and economic, social, and physical security. In fact, this election witnessed a rise in the number of women's involvement in politics. These problems significantly influenced how people voted. Women are growing increasingly conscious of their rights and welfare programmes, even when other elements including language, caste, class, and religion influence the decision. It is crucial to understand that, despite an increase in women's involvement in politics, there are still fewer women in positions of leadership than men.

3.8 Tribal Role

Castes and classes are not the same as tribes. While castes among Muslims, Sikhs, or Hindus indicate a person's place in the social structure, tribes can be recognised by a few additional traits. The most significant of these traits are their proximity to nature, the economy's reliance on forests, minerals and other natural resources, a tribe's members' relative social equality, and women's relative freedom from non-tribals. Various religions, including Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and animism, are practiced by tribes. There are unique provisions for the government of areas dominated by tribes in the Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the Indian Constitution. The purpose of these clauses is to safeguard tribal identities, traditions, cultures, and financial interests. To be more precise, the preservation of their cultural identity, as well as the preservation and protection of natural resources like forests, minerals, and other natural resources, foreign immigration, which frequently results in the loss of cultural identity and resource exploitation, regional growth, and the political autonomy guaranteed under the V and VI Schedules. Tribes' voting habits are typically determined by these factors.

3.9 Role of Party Performance

The Performance of the Ruling Party: Every political party participates in elections with a manifesto outlining its promises. Once in power, it's expected to fulfill these commitments. The success or failure of the ruling party, judged against its electoral pledges, significantly

influences public behavior. This was evident in India in 1989 when the Congress (I), despite a landslide victory in 1984, failed to secure even a simple majority in the subsequent election due to its performance shortcomings. Similarly, in 1989 and 1991, the Congress Party and Janata Dal respectively faltered due to their inability to govern effectively, leading to a loss of political stability. This trend is driven largely by an increase in floating voters or switchers, particularly among educated middle-class youth, who are willing to change their allegiance based on party performance.

3.10 Role of Nationalism

Ethnic diversity, communal tensions, regional aspirations, and sub-national identities are inherent realities within Indian society. Recently, sub-nationalism has emerged as a significant factor shaping voter behavior. Occasionally, separatist groups call for election boycotts and employ coercive tactics to dissuade voters from supporting certain parties. Various regional political entities, such as factions of the Akali Dal, Naga Nationalist Organization, Gorkha League, Jharkhand Party, AASU, and AAGSP in Assam, have periodically raised narrow-minded slogans, unsettling the emotional equilibrium of their respective states' populace. These actions by certain political factions have, at times, prompted individuals to organize along narrow and parochial lines.

Summary

In a democracy, elections are a crucial procedure. Especially in India, there have been numerous state and national elections since 1951–1952. People come in a variety of castes, religions, languages, and genders, so they are unable to stay unaffected by these elements. These elements also influence how people vote in elections. However, these elements become even more potent when they are connected to people's other and economic demands. Numerous electoral studies conducted in India have demonstrated the ways in which a variety of factors influence voters' choices.

Review Questions

1. What do you understand by Voting Behaviour?
2. What are the factors that influence a voter's behavior?
3. Define the factors that influence a citizen's voting choice in India.
4. Do you think Caste influence is still relevant in Indian Politics? Explain why?
5. Define the role of Nationalism and Language in Voting Behavior.

UNIT : 4

CHAPTER- RELIGION AND POLITICS

Objective

- Explore the dynamic interaction between religion and politics, including their influence on each other, the impact of religious beliefs on political ideologies and policymaking, the role of religious institutions in governance, and the implications of secularism and religious pluralism in diverse societies.

4.1 Introduction

The Weberian definition of religion is applied in this work. It is emphasized that ideas that are considered "sacred" have always permeated the secular world. In this way, religion is perceived as a source of information, morals, and social standards, serving as a kind of direction to the secular world. According to this perspective, religion is an idea or school of thought that exists inside the holy. It has to deal with the individuals and collectivities that exist in "this world," even if it is related to the "other world" and frequently linked to the "internal" and "spiritual domain" of the person and the collectivity. This is because it provides a means of navigating life.

Politics term is simpler than religious definition. Most people agree that politics is a collection of practices that are firmly ingrained in "this world," or the secular world. The accomplishment, acquisition, maintenance, and consolidation of power are the goals of these actions. The use of holy symbols and metaphors to achieve nonreligious goals is also included in the category of political actions. These are aimed at establishing unique areas for communities when a clear aspiration to gain authority is present. You will study the relationship that exists in societies between politics and religion in this unit. Before attempting to comprehend how religion and politics relate to one another, we first define what each means.

4.2 Understanding Religion and Politics

Politics and religion are inseparable and have always been so in a complicated way. As said by Romila Thapar.

A monocausal explanation that reduces everything to a basic religious purpose is insufficient to explain away the complex elements of the link between religion and politics in the past. As long as religion is contained in a person's ideas, it is a private concern. Religion no longer has to be a private thing when these ideas are shared in public and motivate others to take up causes like erecting monuments to worship or organizing believers to perform political and social roles. Since its formation as a religious institution has an impact on how society functions, it is no longer a question of religion. These roles that are represented by its institutions—monasteries, mathas, temples, mosques, Khangahs, churches, synagogues, and gurdwaras—are part of its religious identity. Their significance must be evaluated in the context of their roles as societal institutions as well as in relation to the religion they practice (Thapar (2004), pp. 229–30.).

What does religion mean to us? Individuals have diverse interpretations of religion. Different viewpoints are used by sociologists, theologians, and philosophers to interpret religion. Nonetheless, religion has often been viewed by sociologists as a social phenomena. Every community has structures, rituals, and religious beliefs. Our perception of daily life is frequently influenced by our religious beliefs. Religion has a significant impact on interpersonal relationships in many civilizations. Our social interactions are often shaped by our religious convictions. Certain communities find that religion serves as a uniting force. It may, however, be a source of contention in some civilizations.

“Religion broadly refers to:

- a) The collective experiences of people everywhere in the globe;
- b) Human relationships, most likely throughout every aspect of existence; and
- c) All aspects of daily life, such as politics, the economics, and education.

Consequently, it is abundantly evident that religion is an outcome of society. It is inextricably linked to politics, as was previously established. Being a social phenomenon and an inherited aspect of society's culture, we are frequently indoctrinated to adopt our parents' religious views, morals, and lifestyles as we grow older. Another possibility is that, when we reach adulthood, we can decide not to practice any religion at all or reject this one and adopt another.

It is very difficult to describe religion as a phenomena, but the idea of the "sacred" in contrast to the "secular" and the "profane" is fundamental to the concept of religion. It is a "specific class of phenomenon, a kind of knowledge, a typology of roles and persons, and a varied form of activities in space and time."(T.N. Madan 1991:2).

In four sections, we examine the connection between politics and religion. The relationship between religion and politics in India historically is covered in the second section. The third section describes how this relationship has manifested itself in contemporary India in the form of communalism, the rise of secularism and fundamentalism, and religious nationalism. The fourth section serves as the conclusion. The first section gives an overview of the various sociological and anthropological approaches to religion and places the perception of religion within this framework.

4.3 Approaches to the study of religion

Numerous social anthropologists and sociologists directed their attention on the study of religion as a significant component of social life. The main perspectives on religion are summarized below.

1. The Functional Approach

This approach's fundamental presumptions are that all societal components are interconnected through shared values and norms and that each component serves a beneficial role in the upkeep of the whole community. The cohesive and consensus-building framework for society is provided by religion. The "sacred" was considered by Durkheim to be the central religious concept or phenomenon. As per his statement...

"A religion is an integrated system of beliefs and practices concerning sacred things, that is, things that are distinct and prohibited—beliefs and practices that unite all those who adhere to them into one single moral community called church." 1965:62.

When compared to the "profane" or the "secular," the idea of the "sacred" takes on a more pointed meaning. This is the fundamental basis of religious occurrences, according to Durkheim.

He states, "All known religious beliefs, no matter how complicated or simple, have one thing in common: they assume a division of things into two classes or opposing groups, real and ideal, which are typically denoted by two different terms that are roughly translated as "profane" and "sacred."

Instead of looking for the historical roots of religion, Durkheim focused on the sociological factors that contributed to its creation, which he discovered to be people's desire for social interaction. For him, religion emerged from social interaction and was a communal phenomena. He researched the Australian aborigines and concurred with the majority of academics that totemism was the most basic, or "the elementary," kind of religion practiced by the aboriginal people. He believed that if one could successfully ascertain the source of totemic ideas, it would also be able to ascertain "the causes leading to the rise of the religious sentiment in humanity."

He traced the origins of religious ideas and practices in social interaction, presenting a thorough analysis of totemic gatherings among these aborigines.

According to Durkheim's conclusion, "the clan itself can therefore be the only source of the collective and anonymous force of the clan, the God of the clan, and the totemic principle" (ibid: 236). Expanding upon the Australian example, which represents the basic manifestation of religious life, Durkheim came to regard society as the origin and supporter of religious beliefs and practices, and hence, God, its constituents, who in turn gave rise to "the sensation of a perpetual dependence." According to Durkheim's theory, religion thus stems from the essence of social existence.

A.R. Radcliffe-Brown's sociological study of ritual was centered on the function of religion in upholding social cohesiveness. His focus in the study of religion on rituals rather than ideas was influenced by W. Robertson Smith. He took a small, but nearby, path after Durkheim. He was interested in the topic of how religion, everywhere and at any time, maintains social cohesion, as was Malinowski and other members of the British school of sociological functionalism. As per his statement...

"The existence of certain sensations in the brains of society's members, which govern an individual's behavior toward others, is necessary for an orderly social life among humans.

Therefore, it can be demonstrated that rites serve particular social purposes when they have the ability to control, preserve, and pass down attitudes that are essential to society's structure from one generation to the next. 1952:157.

According to E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1965), Radcliffe Brown is not correct. His 1937 monograph on the Azande demonstrates how the understanding of paranormal events has shifted from function to meaning. He characterized the practice of witchcraft among the Azande as a mechanism of causation for human misery. The same transition from simple functionalism to the meaning issue may be seen in his later book, "Nuer Religion" (1956), albeit he did not explicitly analyze from a phenomenological standpoint. When it came to understanding Nuer religious philosophy and ritual in terms of social order, he was somewhat similar to Durkheim. David Pocock addresses the issue of subjective meaning in his 1973 research on religious rituals and beliefs in Gujarat and provides an alternative to the limited functionalist perspective.

According to Venugopal (1998), religion can serve a practical purpose. People encounter stressful events in their daily lives, such as illness, tragedy, death, etc., which throw off the regular dynamics of a home. Religion, ritual, and magic can offer a type of comfort under these circumstances that material riches and social standing cannot (1998: 91).

Parsons (1975) and Merton (1968) discussed the practical functions of religion. Merton demonstrates a clear connection between the Puritan morality and the development of science in seventeenth-century England. The Puritan values of diligence, devotion to the betterment of this world, etc., were helpful in the development of scientific temper. Stated differently, scientists were impacted by the logic of religion in their life. Not only were many eminent scientists committed to new ethics, but so were Robert Boyle, John Ray, and Newton. As an homage to the grandeur of God, they used their scientific discoveries to advance the material world (Venugopal, 1998: 91).

Talcott Parsons showed how Christianity's theological foundations supported the normative order of Western civilization and encouraged voluntaristic behavior, in which people devoted their lives to the betterment of others.

Functionalism emphasizes the consensus over a dialectical growth pattern. It ignores the issue of subjective meaning as well as the historical and cultural dimensions of religion and instead examines the role of religion primarily in the present.

2. Weber and the phenomenological approach

Sociological and social anthropological studies of religion have been trending toward phenomenology since the release of Evans-Pritchard's "Nuer Religion," "a trend anticipated in the work of Max Weber" (Madan, 1991:6).

An opposing viewpoint to Durkheim's, which emphasizes the "exteriority" and "coerciveness" of "social truths," which are also communal representations, is offered by Weber's sociology of religion. Weber's emphasis on a "interpretive understanding" of social reality that leads to causal explanation is central to his sociology of religion. According to this viewpoint, comprehension of "religious behavior... can only be achieved from the viewpoint of the subjective experiences, ideas, and purposes of the individuals concerned" (1964:1). Put another way, knowledge of religious behavior can only be gained from this perspective by looking at its "meaning."

Preliterate people and the so-called world religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—were among the subjects of Weber's study. He looked at the relationships between religious practices and beliefs and the secular spheres of politics, economics, sexuality, and other areas. He differs from Durkheim in that the latter did not consider the economics and instead focused on the relationship between it and the religious context. Weber made the case in "Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" that the emergence of rational capitalism in Western Europe is causally related to Protestant ethics.

According to Weber, rational capitalistic businesses with fixed capital, free labor, rational specialization, and a mixture of functions connected together in a market economy are only to be found in the modern Western world. and that the occurrence cannot be satisfactorily explained by economic factors alone (Weber 1947: 279)

He examined the Calvinist ethics of Protestantism and said that the concepts of predestination and "calling," or the belief that one's destiny and labor are both predestined by God, were central to this ethic. This notion of predestination caused concern among Calvinists. He relied on the Calvinist belief that "God helps those who help themselves" to help him deal with his

anxieties. As a result, he independently finds redemption, or at least the conviction that he does (1930:115).

This resulted in worldly asceticism, or the practice of delaying satisfaction. This unintentionally contributed to the accumulation of money and increased investment, which nourished capitalism. The Christian ascetics "strode in the market place of life" in this manner.

Therefore, in Europe, capitalism was a part of the rationalization process that was made possible by Christian theological arguments. Weber looked at the economic ethics of the other major global religions in addition to Europe. "Indian religiosity is the cradle of those religious ethics which have abrogated the world, theoretically, practically, and to the greatest extent" is the fundamental conclusion he reached after studying the religions of India (1958:323). Nevertheless, some social scientists discovered that this view was not accurate at the field level, like Milton Singer (1972) and others who investigated religion in India. Singer's research validated that. Hindu entrepreneurs were able to separate their personal lives from their professional lives. There are aspects of both Buddhism and Jainism that are more in line with the ethics of business and profit.

Weber made a distinction between "rationally active asceticism," which is this worldly striving for world mastery, and "mysticism," which is the attitude of renouncing engagement in the world. Therefore, the connected issues of religion's future and the nature of human life in contemporary society were the main focus of Weber's sociology of religion. According to him, people intentionally shape their own religious destiny through the social structures and worldviews they create for themselves. Weber has a significant impact on recently published studies in the topic.

According to Peter Berger, religion is that unique human endeavor that creates a complete, significant, and holy universe. (Berger, 1973). Cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz sees religion as a system of symbols that implicitly include a worldview and associated morality. These two social scientists emphasize how crucial interpretative comprehension is. According to Berger, religion provides a means of giving life "meaning," giving social life legitimacy, and assisting in the dismantling of chaos. According to Geertz, religion gives purpose to human existence even in the face of moral ambiguities and interpersonal disputes.

3. Structuralist Approach

Claude Levi-Strauss's structuralist approach in anthropology is responsible for a significant theoretical advancement in the study of religion today.

The study of the "sacred" is categorized by Levi-Strauss under systems of thinking, categorization schemes, myths, etc. He rejects the idea that "totemism" only refers to religious manifestations. Totems are more like categorization schemes to him. Refer to Levi-Strauss (1963, 1966). According to him, the sacred items' value stems from their availability as tangible representations of abstract concepts rather than from the limited concerns of usefulness or their moral or social nature. Primitive people have different symbols than civilized people, but they do not "think" differently. Religious systems, which consist of myths and rituals, are symbolic systems of signals and communication that create connections between cosmic order and social life as well as between nature and society through analogous reasoning.

Among Indianist studies' most prominent proponents of the structuralist method is Louis Dumont. His 1967 work "Homo Hierarchicus" identifies religious values—concepts of what is pure and what is impure—as the system's fundamental basis.

Social phenomena, or cultural realities, are presented as evident manifestations of underlying "latent" structures above "the threshold of consciousness" in the writings of both Levi-Strauss and Dumont. Explaining this link and demonstrating that civilizations differ not in basic component parts but rather in the ways in which these elements are connected in different patterns is the aim of structural analysis.

A few more social scientists who have conducted a structural analysis of religion in India include Veena Das (1977) and JPS Uberoi (1996). They offer an interpretation of ritual in regard to the framework of social interactions as well as certain basic categories of cognition (such as time, space, purity, power, and auspiciousness).

These strategies all share the belief that religion plays a significant role in social interactions. The significance of a system of beliefs, rituals, and practices lies not in its components, but rather in how these elements are actualized and expressed in social interactions among

individuals and groups within a community. It has sociological significance because it forms the foundation for social interactions that generate separate, sometimes opposing identities through the demarcation of borders using language, metaphors, and rhetorical methods.

As a result, perceived religion has always served as a crucial foundation for identity and a delineation of borders. The theological, cosmological, and philosophical substance of religion in and of itself is not important; rather, importance comes from the use of religion by people and communities for political purposes.

Religion and Politics in India: Historical Overview

India's history, from prehistoric periods to the present, reveals that the country has seen varying patterns of religious and political interaction, each with its own set of societal ramifications. (T.R. Sharma, 1988: 41). Sharma makes the case that the use of religion to further political goals and ambitions has been a constant throughout India's history, albeit to differing degrees. In India, politics has always served religion, and religion has frequently served politics. Politics could never completely eradicate religion, and religion could never totally free itself from politics. Therefore, throughout our history, there has been some degree of overt or covert religious politicization. According to him, there have historically been four stages in India's relationship between politics and religion. The Indus Valley Civilization was the first phase, followed by the arrival of Islam, the Indian Mutiny in 1857, the Indian Independence in 1947, and the Fourth Phase beginning in 1947. Although there was constant connection between politics and religion throughout all of these stages, the type, degree, and dynamics of this relationship varied.

In pre-colonial India, there has been an intricate interweaving of the holy and secular ideas. India's social structures—political, religious, and occupational—have undergone constant change throughout the years. In India, religions have been the main driver of conflict, creativity, and even civilization (see Venugopal, 1998). In India, religious idioms have played a significant role in igniting change, especially in the context of political and reform movements.

Numerous social reform movements have characterized the early nineteenth century. We examine a few of these social and political reform movements in this section.

Though the British Empire drastically altered the economy, communication, transportation, and administration, it also broke up old social bonds and divided culture. This was the period when Dayanand Saraswati in the North, Jyotirao Phule in Maharashtra, and Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal launched educational and socioreligious reforms as well as a new outlook on national life. They drew from Western understanding as well as Indian tradition. The rationalist and liberal theories, which held that each individual should be viewed as a citizen and a human being, served as the foundation for society, served as their inspiration.

They sponsored universities and institutions for both men and women, using the Western organizational techniques. Raising cultural awareness across the country was their goal. The twentieth-century political awakening was made possible by the widespread awakening that these reform movements sparked. The educated middle classes of Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and other regions were the driving force behind the independence movement in its early phases. A religious movement inspired young people to take part in the independence struggle in addition to receiving a liberal education. (Venugopal 1998).

Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Maharashtra brought back the Ganapati puja on a grand scale, and it later became a forum for political gatherings. Religious symbolism centered around the Durga Puja were employed by Bipin Chandra Pal, Ras Behari Ghosh, and their allies in Bengal to instill a political consciousness. In addition, the public was exposed to political themes through socio-religious plays in these and other Indian regions. Gandhiji mobilized most Indians during the National Independence Movement by utilizing the Hindu concept of "Ram Raya" to bring people together

Religion and Politics in Contemporary India

These days, the main topics of discussion in India are communalism, secularism, and fundamentalism/religious nationalism. Religion and politics in modern India may be seen as going through a distinct phase when interests other than "regions" direct people's behavior.

It must be stated up front that communalism is not primarily about religion.

"It can be characterized as an ideology that views the religious community as a political entity dedicated to defending and advancing its cultural values and social and economic interests." It thus serves as nationalism's replacement. The terms "Pakistan" and "Khalistan"

refer to the country that the organization has either occupied or tried to occupy and are perceived as "holy land" or the "land of the pure."

Louis Dumont made the observation that the religious component of communalism appears to be little more than the shadow of religions, that is, religion understood not as the substance and meaning of life in all its forms but merely as a symbol used to set one human, or at least essentially political, group apart from others (Madan, 1991). One crucial issue that has to be answered in the context of India is if the ongoing communal riots and communalism in the country have anything to do with the actual "religious" teachings of the opposing religions. This section looks at the communal riots between Muslims and Hindus in an effort to provide a solution to this issue.

The historical examination of communal strife between Hindus and Muslims, including its roots and circumstances, has been extremely controversial. A subset of historians, including Gyanendra Pandey (2000), claims that... Ayesha Jalal (1985), Sandrio Freitag (1989), etc. The British colonial rulers played a significant role in the construction of Hindu-Muslim consciousness and conflict, either through their intentional "divide and rule" policies or by their methods of classifying, typifying, and categorizing the various Indian peoples. For instance, they classified some tribes as criminal tribes. Class, social, and elite political interests are connected to these creations of Hindu and/or Muslim communal awareness or communalism as forms of ideology. For them, therefore, the rise of communal awareness is a tool of conflict, be it Hindu-Muslim or British-led, for political power or domination. Conflicts that were presented within a communal language frequently resulted in communal violence throughout the battle. They contend that communalism is only a front for a wide range of primarily political and economic issues.

The alternative school of historians, represented by C.A. Bayly (1985) and Gaborieau (1985), contends that there is greater continuity between the past and the present, going all the way back to the Moghul era in some cases and at least to the early 18th century. They believed that pre-modern eras had interfaith strife and riots that resembled the current Hindu-Muslim conflict. They placed more emphasis on the importance of their religion and the strong communal identities that existed before them (Brass, 2003).

Nonetheless, remnants of the previous colonial rulers' "divide and rule" strategy may still be found in contemporary India. The impact that has created a significant rift between India's two main Muslim and Hindu groups is subject to fluctuations in the country's political landscape and religious beliefs. "It would seem idle to over-emphasize the similarities, continuities, and persisting idioms that may have existed before the 19th century," asserts Brass. The subcontinent's diverse Hindu and Muslim communities are uniting, and their disagreements are becoming more and more politicized. A discourse of Hindu-Muslim difference was created during the course of the power struggles that began during British rule, grew more intense in the late 19th century, and resulted in the division of India in 1947. This discourse has deeply ingrained itself in both communities and has gained some momentum that is partially self-sustaining while also being fed by political rivalry. According to Brass (2003).

One of the most well-known writers on Hindu-Muslim riots in India, Ali Asghar Engineer, asserts that neither the Hindu nor the Muslim communities are to blame for the outbreak of communal riots, blaming instead the use of religion by politicians for their own political ends. According to him, the causes of the outbreak of communal rioting are the politicians on the one hand and the economic rivalry between Muslims and Hindus on the other. According to him, politicians with little minds take advantage of trivial conflicts and are willing to sacrifice lives in order to further their political agendas. Political movements can occasionally be the source of violence. One such instance is the "Ramshila puja," in which Hindu militants carried bricks to Ayodhya in an effort to demolish the Babri Mosque and erect a temple dedicated to the deity Ram. Nationwide riots broke out as a result of these processions. According to Engineer, the pursuit of political benefit at any costs is the main reason for the communal riots in India. It is evident that riots persist in spite of the outspoken condemnations of the state, elite intellectuals, and all affected members of the opposing groups.

Brass explains its persistence with a Mertonian sort of functional analysis. According to him, riots provide tangible, advantageous benefits to certain individual groups, organizations, and even society at large. He goes on to discuss the functional utility of the ongoing Hindu-Muslim riots in India for a wide range of interests, parties, institutions, and organizations, including eventually the state, using another of the more popular meanings of the term

"function," which is "use" or "utility." In these conditions, a wide enough agreement in society cannot be achieved to eradicate violent riots from public life in India.

Hence, in contrast to the widely held belief that riots are unplanned rather than planned, that they occur either suddenly as a result of tensions building up that may or may not burst under fortunate conditions, according to Brass, they are...

"well organized and arranged from start to finish. Instead, these are street theater productions, dramatic productions that are designed to seem spontaneous but involve a large number of people in a variety of roles and actions. These actions include piqueing the audience's interest, dramatizing and expanding incidents into suitable subjects for a performance, and ultimately producing the event itself. [They are] dramatic productions, the products of particular individuals, organizations, and political parties that function through institutionalized riot networks within a discursive framework of communal opposition and hostility between Muslims and Hindus. This, in turn, generates particular forms of political practice that render riots essential to the political process.

Secularism

Following India's Partition, which resulted in forced migration and sectarian genocide as well as independence, there was a fervent discussion regarding the nature of the new nation-state: should it be secular, meaning it should be multi-community and provide equal rights to everyone, socialist, or Hindu? (Pandey, 2001).

Pakistan became apparent as a predominantly Muslim nation when parts of the Indian Hindu nationalist press started advocating for the extermination of Muslims from India.

This was the birth of Hindu nationalism, but it was strongly followed by the much more inclusive nationalism that emphasized the multifaceted nature of Indian culture and refused to accord the Hindu element in India's history and self-consciousness the same level of priority. Nehru referred to this as the "real" or Indian "Nationalism," but it was later dubbed "secular nationalism." This was the Indian Constitution's nationalism.

A national consensus over the idea of a secular Indian polity that developed throughout the national struggle is reflected in the Indian Constitution. It is crucial to note that secularism in the Western sense—that is, the separation of church and state—does not apply in India. In

this context, it suggests that the state acts impartially toward its citizens who practice diverse religions (Sarva Dharma Sambhav).

The expansion of the contemporary industrial method of production and the rise of scientific knowledge have resulted in the creation of a secular society in the West. While the rise of modern industrial societies has been accompanied by a process of differentiation whereby various parts of the society and their functions become increasingly specialized based on knowledge, the growth of scientific knowledge causes the cognitive function of the religious and scientific worlds to decline.

India has a distinct understanding of the secular than does the West. Dr. Ambedkar said that the caste system and other aspects of Hindu religion were so pervasive in this society that they affected every facet of life, from conception to death, which led to departures from the traditional secularism. Gandhi claimed that our legislatures could not pass any social reforms until the state had the authority to do so. He also thought that secular law may be used to address social problems in some circumstances.

India's varied society and experience, together with the non-dualist worldview of its people, all have an effect on India's secularism. It has therefore been appropriately referred to as a "canopy concept"—an all-encompassing idea founded on universal tolerance—wherein the state is tasked with reforming a society where religion dictates social behavior and the structure of society.

Intellectuals are becoming less and less certain about the usefulness of secularism in India, especially in light of the recent social and political changes that have occurred.

"...the country's social and political unrest strengthens, not weakens, the case for secularism." (2000, Beteille).

Secularism is necessary, but not because it will remove religious fervor from human affairs; rather, it may mitigate and moderate it to some degree in public life. It is difficult in a democracy to stop political leaders from taking advantage of religious feelings or religious leaders from forming political alliances, no matter how strongly one may want to keep religion and politics apart.

India differs from Western nations like Britain and France in terms of both demography and culture. Although they make up a relatively tiny percentage of India's population overall, religious minorities are quite numerous. Here, there is little doubt that, in the long or medium term, religious identity disparities will be eradicated by either nonviolent integration or coercive conversion.

Therefore, secularism guarantees that no religion ideology or group has unjustified dominance over any other, and it does so by fostering institutions that are inherently unresponsive to religious demands.

Secularism is a philosophy of moderation, which makes it especially compatible with democratic politics, whether it is seen as equal tolerance for all religions or with apathy toward religion in certain areas of social life. When political parties inflate or take advantage of religious divisions to garner support for their cause, it is damaged. Refer to Beteille (2000).

Fundamentalism

Madan describes fundamentalism as (i) affirming scripture's inspiration, final authority, inerrancy, and transparency as the source of belief, knowledge, morals, and manners; (ii) admitting that fundamentalism is reactive rather than original, as, for example, orthodoxy is; and (iii) intolerance of dissent, implying monopoly over truth. Madan draws on the experiences of American fundamentalists as well as the Iranian revolution in 1979. (v) an appeal to tradition, but in a selective way that forges a meaningful connection between the past and the present while redefining or even creating tradition in the process; (iv) cultural critique, that is, the notion that all is amiss with social or community life as lived at a specific time; (vi) seizing political power and reorganizing the government to accomplish the declared goals; and (vii) charismatic leadership. Danan (1998), pp. 27–28.

Nonetheless, orthodoxy, revivalism, cultural nationalism, traditionalism, and communalism have all been associated with fundamentalism; the latter two in particular should be quickly distinguished from the former. In contrast to fundamentalism, traditionalism is more subdued and happy to keep religion contained inside the boundaries of the holy without encroaching into other spheres of life, especially the political one. Both communalism and fundamentalism include action; however, whereas communalists have a specific "other," fundamentalists see "the rest" as a "general other," therefore their conflict is more between "us" and "the rest." Furthermore, the definition of fundamentalism's community of believers

is rooted deeply in its intellectual and religious foundations. It is self-producing and inwardly focused. Gupta (1996), p. 206.

It is well known that long-range tolerance and catholicism are ingrained traits of Indian psychology that transcend cultural boundaries. Despite India's multiracial, multireligious, multilingual, and multicultural makeup, fundamentalism remains foreign to the majority of its citizens. At the grassroots, or people's level, the Nationalist Movement was mostly inclusive, and its ideals are reflected in the Indian Constitution.

However, parts of Madan's list of the seven characteristics of fundamentalism may be found or recognized in Indian politics. In India, both historically and currently, there have been pockets or "enclaves" of fundamentalist elements among the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Christian communities. In actuality, Indians have seen periodic attacks by various forms of fundamentalism, particularly terrorism, communalism, and religious nationalism.

This is due to a number of factors. However, over the last five or six decades, this phenomenon has been closely linked to the Indian political system's "democratization," which has resulted in the introduction of political "power" and all that it entails.

Moreover, the idea of Pan-Islamism, which manifests itself in movements such as tabliqi (conversion or proselytisation), is the source of Islamic fundamentalism. This, in turn, gives rise to Hindu fundamentalism, such as the Shuddhi movement.

Pan-Islamism also has worldwide repercussions. For instance, Islamic extremist groups in India have received funding from several Islamic governments. The Meenakshi Puram conversion phenomenon was a highly noticeable aspect of the political landscape throughout the 1980s.

We specifically want to bring forth a few examples of how religion plays a part in modern Indian politics. First, the founder of Pakistan, M.A. Jinnah, who was not at all well-known for his religion, asserted that one did not need to be religious to understand the cultural distinctions between Islam and Hinduism. He emphasized that the justification for Pakistan's independence came from the cultural uniqueness of Indian Islam. He views Islam and Hinduism as separate social systems that are part of two different civilizations that are

primarily founded on opposing ideas and concepts rather than as religions in the traditional sense of the word.

Consider the increase in Sikh militancy throughout the 1980s. Fundamentalism among Sikhs is a 'reactive' phenomena. Aggression serves as a protective mechanism in which dread of the dangerous other—namely, communal Hindus, secularists from all groups, and nonconformist Sikhs—as well as specific processes—such as heresy, modernization, cultural disintegration, and political dominance—is concealed by aggression. Dana, 1998). These are the kinds of worries and anxieties that the extremists would want to see in every Sikh.

The historical and political factors that contributed to the rise of this perceived danger to cultural identity are too extensively discussed here. To put it succinctly, however, this dread and concern culminated not only in the call for a separate Sikh state, or "Khalistan," but also in the emergence of fundamentalism among a segment of the Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu populations. This is also shown in the 'right' of certain religious communities, particularly Sikhs, to reject the separation of religion and politics in the conduct of their own communal life, which they seek to be recognized. Dana, 1998).

Summary

India's officially recognized philosophy, secular nationalism, has its origins in the national struggle. It suggests that all religions are equal in the sense that none will have a disproportionate influence on how the state runs its affairs. However, the word "secular" suggests that the state is impartial toward all religions rather than separating itself from religion. In India, secularism is defined as religious equidistance rather than complete disengagement. Here, an Indian's citizenship is determined by their birthright rather than their religion.

Two of the most significant organizational mechanisms for popular politics in India have been secular nationalism and religious nationalism. These movements have sparked political emotions, sometimes turning violent. It has mostly manifested as Muslim and Hindu nationalism. Muslim nationalism began to take shape in the early 1900s. Pakistan was founded as a result of it in 1947. One may see Hindu nationalism as Muslim nationalism's reflection. Hindu nationalists contend that other religions must adapt to the Hindu core as Hinduism is not only the predominant religion of the Indian populace but also the source of India's unique national identity. In Varshney (2002). Hindu nationalists are adamant about

maintaining Hindu unity in politics and asserting their cultural and political superiority in determining India's future.

To put it succinctly, Indian politics are intricate and subcontinental. Pluralism has been its defining characteristic. India has embraced the democratic political culture since 1947. In this ethos, secularism, the emergence of communalism, religious nationalism, and fundamentalism are only a few of the issues brought up by the dynamics of the link between religion and politics. Above all, it has brought up the delicate subject of what India's national identity actually is. Furthermore, who is an Indian?

Self Assessment

- Explain **Religion and Politics in Contemporary India**
- Describe fundamentalism
- Explain Secularism

UNIT : 5

CASTE AND POLITICS

Objectives:

- Describe the Indian caste system, talk about the rise of caste-based organizations.
- List the roles that caste plays in both electoral and non-electoral Indian politics. Identify the relationship between caste and democracy
- Define the extent of caste and politics, and interpret the function of caste in electoral politics.

5.1 Introduction:

One of the key elements influencing politics in India is caste. It is true that politics has an impact on caste, but caste also has an impact on politics. The two basic categories of politics that comprise caste and politics are electoral and non-electoral. In politics, caste is a major factor. Numerous research on the connections between Indian politics and caste have brought attention to this reality. Caste groups and political parties organize the castes to address their issues. Indian society has changed dramatically since gaining its independence. India's politics and caste system have changed as a result of these developments. The caste system now affects democracy in addition to its traditional function of executing caste-based jobs. Caste has changed as a result of governmental initiatives including social programs, land reforms, reservations for marginalized communities in public institutions, and infrastructure development.

The representation of OBCs and Dalits in Indian politics has grown throughout time. Compared to the early years of the nation's independence, when only the upper castes and the dominant middle castes occupied political space, this is different. There is a connection between politics and caste. In this relationship, politics influences caste, but caste influences politics as well. The fact that several political parties are associated with specific castes in multiple states of the nation indicates the importance of caste in politics.

5.2 Caste and Politics:

The scope of politics and caste includes a variety of topics pertaining to distinct castes and the organizations that support them. Political parties and caste organizations are among these establishments. The main topics of discussion in caste politics include the relationships of dominance and subordination between castes, violence motivated by caste, employment reservations in public institutions, social assistance programs, social and cultural recognition, self-respect, human rights, social justice, etc. A share of the power structure is the driving force for caste rivalry and conflicts. Competition between political parties, political disputes, and the struggle for power among castes almost entirely replaces the competition between castes. To win elections, political parties create plans to encourage castes. Castes may become more powerful as a result of their representation in institutions and policies. Achieving this share can be done through ensuring that castes are represented in political institutions, particularly local and Vidhan Sabha and Lok Sabha, as well as in administrative and educational frameworks. Policies intended to promote the wellbeing of communities can also make it possible. Thus, the caste system's share of politics influences caste relations.

Thus, the caste system's share of politics influences caste relations. Caste and politics broadly speaking refer to the mobilization of castes by various political parties in both electoral and non-electoral politics. Additionally, caste groups must mobilize the castes in this.

India's federal political system allows for the examination of the relationship between caste and politics at several levels of the system, including local governance institutions (PRIs and urban government), state-level Vidhan Sabha elections, and the national Lok Sabha elections.

5.3 Examples of issues of caste politics:

These concerns include redistributive justice, cultural issues, violence based on caste and reservations issues.

5.3.1 Reservation:

Indian caste groups, known as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Castes (OBCs), are entitled to reservations in public institutions. SCs are eligible for jobs, admission to educational institutions, membership in legislative bodies, and employment in local governance institutions like panchayats and municipalities. OBCs are also eligible for jobs in public institutions, admission to educational institutions, and employment in local governance

institutions like municipalities. Caste politics is closely linked to the reservation problem. Politics surrounding reservations involves a variety of castes. Certain castes are either left out of the category eligible for reservation, or they demand that reservations be made for them, or caste-based reservations be abolished. The reserved rights' eligible castes wish to keep the reserved rights for themselves. Since the many castes that make up groups like SCs and OBCs have varying degrees of social, educational, and economic performance, some castes within them believe that reservation rules have not benefited them. According to them, the better off members of the special caste categories benefit the most from reservations.

For Example, in Uttar Pradesh, the Most Backward Classes urge that the OBC reservation quota be divided into smaller groups to ensure that the benefits of reservation are distributed to them and do not disproportionately benefit the dominant castes within the OBC population. In this regard, various Hindi state MBCs have demanded sub-division of quota along the lines of the Karpooori Thakur Formula. This formula bears the name of the Bihar chief minister who subdivided the OBC quota to enable the reservation policy to assist the most disadvantaged segments. Even farming populations started agitating to be included in the OBC category: the Jats in Rajasthan in 1999 and 2009, the Marathas in Maharashtra in 2016, and the Patels in Gujarat in 2015. OBC lists in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan were expanded to include Jats due to Jat agitation. These changes were made by the Congress government in Rajasthan and the BJP government in Delhi.

Both the proponents and opponents of reservations present evidence to back up their claims. Opponents of reservation contend that merit and the economy should be the foundation of reservations, that caste-based reservations negatively impact merit and the effectiveness of government, and that certain castes that are on the OBC list hold significant political and economic power. In the case of the OBCs, particularly those belonging to economically and politically dominant OBCs, it is argued that the constitution guarantees reservation to the socially and educationally backward communities. Advocates of reservation contend that caste discrimination still exists and that merit is determined by social inequalities. They do not advance socially or academically even when their social and economic circumstances improve. They are therefore entitled to reservation as OBCs under the constitution.

Difference between supporters and opponents of reservation have occasionally resulted in agitations and counter-agitations. Frequently, these protests have descended into violence, characterized by caste-based fights, property destruction, or both. The 1990 Mandal Commission report, which recommended giving reservations to OBCs for jobs in central government institutions, sparked protests against its implementation. Other instances of how reservation became a divisive issue in caste politics include anti-reservation agitations in Gujarat in 1981 and 1985 and in Bihar in the 1970s. Many northern Indian states, including Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Bihar, were impacted by the protests against the Mandal Commission report. One Delhi University student, Rajeev Goswami, self-immolated during this protest. Zoya Hasan describes how many castes in Uttar Pradesh fought to support or against the execution of the Mandal Commission Report in her book *Quest for Power: Oppositional Agitations and Post-Congress Politics in Uttar Pradesh*.

Two reservations agitations that occurred in 1981 and 1985 are covered in studies by Ghanshyam Shah (1987) and Nikita Sud (2012). In Gujarat, quota gave rise to tensions between the castes that were supposed to benefit from it and those who did not between 1981 and 1985. Gujarat's reservation politics have a political history. The Gujarat government, led by the Congress led by Indira Gandhi, established the Socially and Educationally Backward Class (SEBC) Commission in 1972. Justice Baxi served as the commission's chairman. The commission's goal was to identify the state's backward classes so that they might be granted reservations at public institutions.

The Baxi Commission's appointment was a step to fulfill the Congress's pledge to acknowledge Kshatriyas as "backward." According to Kothari (1970), the Kshatriyas comprised a variety of castes, including the highest-ranking Rajputs, Bhils, semi-tribals, Varias, and Koli caste. In fact, the opposition parties had challenged the Congress during the 1960s. Many Kshatriyas, who had previously supported the Congress, voted for the opposition Swatara Party in the 1967 and 1969 elections. By labelling Kshatriyas as "backward," the Congress, led by Indira Gandhi, hoped to gain their support. Before the first Backward Class Commission, in 1954–1955, the Kshatriyas had long demanded to be recognized as a backward class. The Janata Party government, which had taken over from the Congress government in 1978, adopted the recommendations made in the Baxi Commission report, which was submitted in 1976. The Baxi Commission designated 82 castes as "backward," 62 of which were affiliated with various Kolis subgroups. Among the

commission's principal recommendations were the following: In medical and engineering universities, 10% of seats should be reserved for 82 backward communities (OBCs). Additionally, 10% of seats in class III and class IV and 5% of seats in class I and II employment should be reserved for state services.

The Baxi Commission's proposals were met with opposition from the Gujarat Kshatriya Sabha (GKS) and higher castes because the majority of the castes classified as backward were distinct subgroups of Kolis, who would be the primary beneficiaries of quota. Due to their low social position and dire economic circumstances, those castes that the Baxi Commission did not designate as backwards urged that they be deemed so. In response, the Madhav Singh Solanki-led Congress (I) government of 1981 established the Rane Commission, which was chaired by Justice C V Rane, to examine whether any caste that was socially and educationally backward was excluded from the OBC category. In 1983, the Rane Commission turned in its report. Instead of using caste as a criterion to evaluate backwardness, it embraced occupation or economic criteria. In the meantime, the rivalry between Madhav Singh Solanki and Jinabhai Daraji, the leaders of the Congress (I), grew more intense in an attempt to gain the backing of the lower castes and tighten their grip on the party. In 1985, Madhav Singh Solanki increased the OBC quota from 10 to 28 percent in response to Daraji, but he rejected the Rane Commission's recommended economic standard.

He took this action just two months prior to the March 1985 assembly elections.

In this political environment, the medical students at Ahmedabad's BJ Medical College began protesting the Pathology Department's designated seats for SC students. Affidavits opposing the roster, carry-forward, and interchangeability systems of reserved seats were filed in November 1979 by a few students of this college with the Gujarat High Court. The case was lost by the student. Students' protests calling for the elimination of reservations in various cities, including Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Jamnagar, and Surat, followed. In response, the Dalit Panther said that if the demand to end reservations was granted, it will also start a counter-agitation.

Nonetheless, the chief minister declared that merit would not be completely disregarded in fields like teaching and medicine, and the state government chose to do away with the "carry forward" system that reserved seats for SCs and STs in post-graduate medical programs. Dalit Bastis were set on fire in a few villages in the districts of Kheda, Ahmedabad, and

Mehsana. There was another anti-Caste and Politics reservation protest in Gujarat in 1985. Rejecting the Rane Commission's economic criteria, the Madhav Singh Solanki government increased OBC reservation from 10% to 28% in 1985. Similar to the previous anti-reservation movement, Morbi College in Saurashtra was the starting point of this one as well. The students went on strike and skipped class. The Gujarat Bandh was called for by the All Gujarat Educational Reform Education Committee (AGERAC), a group of students in Ahmedabad. After the Gujarat High Court issued an order halting the increase in the OBC quota, the government formed a committee to recommend whether or not to raise the quota and said that it would not do so until the committee's report was received.

The anti-reservation demand was ultimately granted. Shah claimed that Gujarat's reservation politics represented a struggle between members of the middle class, particularly between those of the upper and middle castes and the newcomers from lower castes. In order to gain support and quell the hopes of the excluded communities, the political class instituted reservations. The lower castes' ascent into the middle class caused the upper and high castes to feel uneasy and bereft of their traditional social standing. The media and government backers of the anti-reservationists included capitalists. In Bihar, meanwhile, agitations for and against reservations followed the Karpoori Thakur government's 1978 execution of the Mungeri Lal Commission findings. Within the extremely backward and backward castes, the Karpoori Thakur Formula granted reservations to several castes.

5.3.2 Violence:

Political and caste-related violence is typically linked to caste-based oppression, which includes elections, the celebration of Ambedkar Jayanti, economic exploitation of women, and access to water. Examples of low caste victims of unequal social status and economic disparities may be found in several Indian states. A few instances of caste violence in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh are covered by Oliver Mendelsohn and Marika Vicziany in *The Untouchables: Subordination, Poverty and the State in Modern India* (1998) and Dag-Erik Berg in *Dynamics of Caste and Law: Dalits, Oppression and Constitutional Democracy* (2020). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, caste-based Senas (caste armies) of various castes began to form in Bihar. These were embroiled in violent caste clashes on a regular basis. Conflicts over land ownership, among other things, between Dalits and OBCs like the Yadav or Kurmis, or between Dalits and upper castes like the Bhumihars, frequently resulted in such violence. In February 1980, a disagreement that garnered national attention took place in

Pipra village, Punpun Division, Patna district. Two Dalit families lost members in gunfire, and Dalit homes were set on fire as a result of the land ownership dispute between the Dalits and the Kurmis. Two Kurmi landlords were killed in nearby villages in December 1979 and January 1980, respectively, before the Pipra tragedy occurred.

Additional instances of caste violence against Dalits in Bihar that resulted from land disputes or other social issues include Belchi in 1977, Bishrampur in 1978, and Arwal in the Jehanabad district in 1986 (Mendelsohn and Vicziani, 1998: pp. 62-64). Three incidents of caste-based violence against Dalits resulted in deaths in Andhra Pradesh: in the villages of Tsunder in the Guntur district in 1991, Karmachedu in the Krishna district on July 17, 1985, and Kanchikacherla in the Krishna district in 1968. The dominant caste of landowners in the area had victimized the Dalits.

Berg(2020), using the Karmachedu massacre as an example, contends that the massacre happened for two reasons: the first was a provocation brought on by Dalits' ascent to prominence in society, and the second was Kamma's political strength as the dominant caste of landowner peasants. The Karmachedu massacre stems from an argument that began on July 17, 1985, when a Dalit (Madiga) kid chastised a Kamma boy for cleaning his buffalo in the water tank that Madiga used to get her water.

An old Madiga woman who happened to be there intervened as the Kamma youngster beat up the Dalit boy in reprisal. The inhabitants of Madigawada were attacked as a result of the Kammas' reprisal. Six Dalits lost their lives in the incident when their dwellings were set on fire. The Dalit struggle in Andhra Pradesh was influenced by the Karmachedu tragedy. Additionally, the Dalit Mahasabha was established in Andhra Pradesh just after the killing. Political parties in Andhra Pradesh also took note of the occurrence. The opposition Congress emphasized that some of the village's Kamma families were in contact with N.T. Rama Rao, the chief minister and leader of the Telugu Desam Party.

5.3.3 Caste Symbolism and politics:

Caste Symbols: Historical personalities, myths, and caste icons are crucial instruments for promoting caste awareness. The castes connected to such symbols feel more confident in themselves when they understand their significance. The use of caste symbols in politics is exemplified by the four political regimes in Uttar Pradesh that Mayawati governed at various

points between 1995 and 2012 and which emphasized the significance of these symbols and the BSP's mobilization around them. Ambedkar villages in Uttar Pradesh were designated by the Mayawati regimes. A sizable Dalit community resides in these villages. She proposed many measures for the development of these villages and the well-being of the Dalits residing there. To honor figures and symbols connected to social emancipation and lower castes, her government also built Ambedkar Park in Lucknow and a number of monuments. Together with renaming some existing districts, her administration also built a number of new districts bearing the names of such symbols.

5.4 Caste and Electoral Politics: The relationship between castes and political party support bases, party methods to mobilize castes in electoral politics, and caste profiles of elected members are important components of caste and electoral politics. The influence of caste on electoral politics has been researched by numerous academics since the 1950s.

The Center for Political research, or CSDS, is a Delhi-based organization that has been at the forefront of conducting election research in India. Since the first general elections in 1952, there have been significant shifts in the correlation between caste and electoral politics, as multiple studies have noted. Election politics in the country's various regions were dominated for the first few decades following independence by castes that were historically powerful. Although voting was guaranteed by the constitution to all adults, regardless of caste, the dominant caste has on multiple times prevented Dalits and other lower caste members from exercising their right to vote. "Both capturing" was the colloquial term for this procedure. Many castes supported the Congress party throughout most of the country during the 1950s and 1960s Congress domination period.

The upper and middle castes gave it leadership, and castes from all levels of the social hierarchy backed it in elections. Paul R. Brass views the Congress party as a coalition of castes because of the support of diverse caste groupings. However, since the 1970s, Congress has lost its position as the nation's leading party. Congress's defeat in numerous state elections in 1967 and 1969 served as a sign of it. A number of states saw the rise of state-level leaders who organized middle-caste farming communities including the Yadav, Jat, Kurmis, and OBCs, and founded state-level parties in tandem with the Congress's demise. In north India, Charan Singh served as these tribes' principal leader. They were an integral part of the Janata Party, which was established following the emergency. Governments led by the

Janata Party in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar provided greater representation to the rural and backward groups than Congress governments did, which favored the upper castes.

Summary:

Politics and caste have always been entwined in society, especially in places like India where caste identities have a long history. Politics and caste have intersected to impact social movements, governance, election dynamics, and policy choices. Caste is a big part of political mobilization and representation since it is a social stratification system that determines people's identities, opportunities, and access to resources. The relationship between caste and politics is still a complicated and divisive topic with broad ramifications for democracy, social justice, and nation-building. Examples of this include political alliances founded on caste considerations and affirmative action programs intended to rectify historical injustices. Comprehending the intricate relationships between power, identity, and social transformation in heterogeneous cultures necessitates an understanding of the workings of caste in politics.

Self-Assessment

1. In India's politics, reservations have been a major issue. Give an explanation.
2. What kind of violence does caste-based violence have in India?
3. Provide a brief analysis of caste's influence on electoral politics.
4. How do politics and caste intersect in India?
5. Define the role of caste in politics.

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Glossary

- **Election Commission of India (ECI):** An autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering electoral processes in India, including conducting elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and the office of the President and Vice President.
- **Constituency:** A geographical area represented by an elected member in a legislative body, such as the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, or State Legislative Assemblies.
- **Voter Registration:** The process by which eligible citizens enroll themselves on the electoral rolls to participate in elections. It is facilitated by the Election Commission of India.
- **Nomination:** The formal process by which candidates declare their intention to contest elections by submitting nomination papers to the returning officer within a specified timeframe.
- **Campaigning:** Activities undertaken by political parties and candidates to garner support from voters, including public rallies, door-to-door canvassing, advertising, and social media engagement.
- **Manifesto:** A document released by political parties outlining their policy proposals, goals, and promises to the electorate during election campaigns.
- **Ballot:** The method used for voting, typically involving the casting of votes by marking ballot papers or using electronic voting machines (EVMs) in polling booths.
- **Polling Booth:** A designated location where voters cast their ballots during elections under the supervision of election officials.
- **Counting of Votes:** The process of tabulating and determining the outcome of elections by tallying the votes cast for each candidate or political party.
- **Coalition Government:** A government formed by two or more political parties coming together to govern either at the central or state level, typically formed when no single party secures a majority in elections.
- **Floor Test:** A procedure conducted in legislative bodies, such as the Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assemblies, to determine if the incumbent government enjoys the confidence of the house. Members vote either in favor or against the government, and the outcome decides the government's fate.

- **No-Confidence Motion:** A parliamentary motion initiated by members of the opposition to express lack of confidence in the government. If passed, it can lead to the resignation of the government or the dissolution of the legislative body.