"Importance of Regional and State Parties in Indian Politics"

Thesis
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

The majority of democratic countries in the modern era have adopted' representative democratic forms of government,' in which political parties play a significant role and serve as a 'link between electors and elected.' In comparison to other neighboring nations, India's democracy has been effective; while the emergency traumatized the democratic system, it was only temporary, and the democratic system survived intact. Following independence, 17 Parliamentary and several Assembly elections were successfully held, and political parties in India played a significant and vital role in this process.

Political Parties are the most critical component of modern democratic democracy, yet their function, organisation, and size vary considerably. A country's party system is determined by a variety of elements, including its political system and whether it is federal or parliamentary. The Indian party system has also been shaped by the country's unique political and social characteristics. Following independence, a union-level elected representative parliament and state-level legislative assemblies were established on the same model. The goal of establishing a parliamentary form of government was to build a responsible government, as the executive is continually observed and regulated by the opposition. After examining the parliamentary system's history, it is clear that it shaped the Indian party system significantly. With the end of single-party supremacy and the advent of the coalition era, the fragmentation of political parties occurred more swiftly, resulting in the country's multi-party system.

Another significant aspect that has impacted the party system in India to a greater extent is the country's federal structure. Though it does not qualify as a 'distinctive federal system,' constitutional authority has been split between the federal and state governments. State governments are formed through Assembly elections, which are overwhelmingly won by state parties with

diverse ideologies and programmes that represent the diverse interests of citizens.

India's diversity is another significant element that has a significant impact on the party system. In India, there are four fundamental social divisions: language, tribe, religion, and caste. 1 The first two are mostly connected with geographical variety and are geographically concentrated; the final two are associated with social diversity and are found throughout the country. These diversities are strongly reflected in the country's party system.

The Indian party system evolved in response to the aforementioned reasons, with regional and state-level parties playing a key role. Regional parties' presence in states dates back considerably further than their role in national politics. Congress lost ground in the majority of Southern states in 1967, and regional aspirations evolved in the form of state-based regional political parties, but it took nearly two decades for these parties to have a strong national presence. Although the Janata Party government formed following the emergency provided an introductory glimpse of the Congress' decline and the emerging strength of regional political parties during their brief tenure, the true strength of regional parties became apparent only after the 1989 Lok Sabha elections, when a coalition of regional/state-based parties known as the 'National Front' formed the government at the centre led by Vishwanath Pratap Singh. The 1989 general election is a watershed moment in the history of India's political system. Regional parties registered their presence in national politics for the first time. The Janata Dal-led coalition comprised regional political organisations such as the Andhra Pradesh TDP, Kerala's Congress (S), and Tamil Nadu's Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). The purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of regional parties and their shifting dynamics in India's national politics.

The Problem's Description:

Within the context of the research problem, this study focuses on the role of regional and state parties in Indian national politics. Additionally, the paper investigates the role of regional and state parties in forming and dismantling union administrations since 1989. Without a doubt, the UPA and NDA were formed through the alliances of a variety of parties, both national and provincial. This research will delve into the theoretical underpinnings of the creation and evolution of regional and state parties across states, as well as the parties' various patterns of organisation. The increased negotiating power within these alliances/coalitions undoubtedly has an effect on the national politics of the pan-India parties. To what extent their involvement has an effect on national politics, and in what way, is the study problem's guiding principle.

1989 is chosen as the year to examine the role of regional and state parties in national politics because it is the year when the involvement of regional political parties in national politics significantly increased, resulting in numerous changes to the Indian federal system. Finally, an attempt will be made to comprehend the dynamics of regional parties in light of the shifting party system anticipated following the 2014 general elections.

The Study's Objectives:

This study makes an attempt to accomplish the following goals:

- To examine the various stages of the party system in general, with an emphasis on the unique characteristics of the Indian party system.
- To retrace the origins and expansion of regional and state-based parties through the lens of various theories.
- To examine the involvement of regional and state parties in the formation of the national coalition government(s).
- To gain a better understanding of the declining importance of these regional and state parties in national politics and the many consequences for Indian politics in the aftermath of the 2014 general elections.

Hypothesis:

The purpose of this study is to examine the following hypothesis:

- Regional parties cannot supplant major parties in national politics.

- Regional parties will continue to play a significant role in India's political system.

- Ideological and leadership disagreements wreak havoc on regional parties' unity.

- After 2014, the key task for regional parties is to broaden their social base.

METHODOLOGY

The thesis employs a historical, descriptive, and analytical methodology. Prior knowledge is required for the acquisition of new knowledge. This strategy is used to trace the origins and growth of regional/state political parties in both national and state politics. Additionally, a comparison method was employed to examine the trajectory of regional and state-based political parties in various states. To gather data, regional political party leaders will be questioned, and their opinions and responses will be analysed and included into the thesis.

The thesis's data, facts, and figures are derived from both primary and secondary sources. The principal sources of the information are the ECI (Election Commission of India) data, the Lok Sabha debates, the CSDS (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies) Data Unit, and the questionnaire responses of regional political party leaders. Secondary sources include books, published research papers, newspaper and magazine articles.

Review of the Literature:

This research is separated into four sections, each of which discusses a different component of the Indian party system, with a particular emphasis on the dynamics of regional and state parties within the Indian political system. The Indian party system has its own distinct trajectory, which has captivated scholars

from the start. There is a wealth of literature that has been extremely beneficial in not only comprehending the fundamental notions of the party system, but also in the development of this thesis. We will simply quickly review significant publications in the field in order to demonstrate how our study links to earlier efforts and how it contributes to the existing reputable literature.

Maurice Duverger's Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State (Methuen and Company Limited., London, 2004). This book makes an important contribution to the body of knowledge on the party system. This book is divided into two sections: the first discusses the evolution of political party structures, membership, and leadership. It examines several sorts of party organisations and attempts to describe and evaluate the parties' leadership and membership. The second section of the book discusses the party system and the political structure that accommodates many sorts of party systems, including single/one-party systems, dual/two-party systems, and multi-party systems. Additionally, it discusses methods for assessing party strength, the issue of party coalitions, and the general relationship between political parties and administrations.

The book's many sections are conceptualized within the context of America alone, from which Duverger suggests a general hypothesis about the party system, which is the study's primary shortcoming. Regardless of its limitations, it contributes significantly to our thoughtful understanding of the party system in general.

Myron Weiner's Party Politics in India: The Evolution of a Multi-Party System (Princeton University Press, 2000). This book's first edition was published in 2007 and covers the early years of the Indian party system. The author discusses the party system in India, where universal suffrage was recently implemented and the country is aspiring to develop a political system that caters to the diverse classes, interests, and loyalties of its diverse populace while also preserving the critical foundation of national unity. The majority of the book is devoted to 'case

studies' of party splits and effective alliances between political parties (particularly that between the Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party in 2002), as well as details of failed union-level efforts, such as those between the Jan Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha.

The author contends that the Congress Party, like Western political parties, represents a synthesis of different interest groups. The other political parties in India are either characterised by a single interest or by ideas, and hence make 'complete' demands such as 'the Hindu Nation' or' socialization.' The author observes that in India, the creation of organised interest groups acted as a stabilizing influence; and later pressure from interest groups and political parties forced the government to negotiate and finally negotiate more readily.

Though the title of this wonderful book is slightly misleading, as it implies that India's union has already moved to a multi-party political system. Nonetheless, as the book notes, "India may be defined as having a one-party democratic system, based on consent rather than compulsion, as found in one-party dictatorships." There are now no effective opposition parties to the Congress, at least on a national basis. Regardless of disagreements, the paper is a noteworthy addition for the material it includes about India and for shedding light on the study of Indian political parties in general.

Francine R. Frankel, Zoya Hasan, Rajeev Bhargava, and Balveer Arora edited Transforming India: Social and Political Dynamics of Democracy. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010). This is an edited collection of essays by notable social scientists on various facets of Indian democracy. This is required reading for anyone interested in studying the democratic process and its numerous facets in India. It describes the understanding and experience of India's democratic functioning during the last fifty years and analyses the profound changes brought about by the democratic form of government. The book's several parts address the roles of various constitutional and extra-constitutional institutions, including the court, political parties, federalism, the electronic media, and the police. The

chapters that explain the electoral surge of historically marginalised groups, the fragmentation of political parties, and regionalization trends are critical to this argument. This book aided me in comprehending the country's democratic process.

Zoya Hasan edited Parties and Party Politics in India (Oxford India Press, New Delhi, 2010). The book is an anthology of writings on Indian politics and the party system. It explores the Congress system, as well as national and regional political parties. Additionally, the compilation analyses these parties in terms of their impact on the evolving nature of Indian politics, including their relationship to caste, class, communal, and regional politics. The first section of this book analyses the Congress party's dominance and decline, while the second section discusses the development and growth of Hindu Nationalist politics, as well as the role of its ideology. The third segment assesses left-wing political parties and radical politics. The fourth segment examines social diversity and regional and state-based party politics. The fifth and concluding section of this book discusses political competition and party system transformation, as well as coalition politics. The entire book provides a detailed account of the evolution of India's party system since independence.

Kanchan Chandra's Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India. (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2004). This work contributes significantly to the theoretical understanding of Indian political parties. Chandra elaborates on her argument through the lens of 'Patronage Democracy.' According to K. Chandra, patronage democracy is a style of administration in which the public sector is larger than the private sector and the state has a monopoly on access to services and other jobs. According to the author, elected government representatives must have authority over the enforcement of laws and the allotment of employment and services. The book focuses on the BSP's strategies and performance in three Indian states: Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka. The BSP claims to represent the country's

'Schedule Caste' population, which accounts for a sizable fraction of the total population and is virtually evenly distributed across the country's major states. However, the party has been more effective and successful in some states, like as Uttar Pradesh, than in others, such as Karnataka and Punjab. The purpose of this study is to elucidate the reasons for these parties' success and failure.

Two sections comprise the book. The first section of the book establishes a sound theoretical framework for discussing the successes and failures of ethnic political parties. The remainder of the book analyses empirical facts, as well as a chapter on the performance of India's other three ethnic parties, the BJP, the DMK, and the JMM.

Peter Ronald DeSouza and E. Sridharan edited India's Political Parties (Sage Publications India Pvt. Limited, New Delhi, 2006). The book contains chapters by several experts on India's major political parties. The book's editors are Peter Ronald DeSouza (of CSDS Delhi) and E. Sridharan (of UPenn's India Center). This book discusses a variety of problems and concerns relating to Indian politics in general, with a specific emphasis on the party system. This book portrays the Indian party system as a complex structure that interacts with one another as it competes for power at the national and state levels of the federal political system, which is composed of various state and national party systems. The writers compile seminal works, studies on national and regional parties, and concise remarks on key facets of parties and the party system. The book provides an excellent overview of the history and ideas that shaped these numerous political parties, ranging from the Congress to the Shiv Sena. It's an excellent place to start for someone who is largely politically naive, as much is unknown. Apart from political parties, there are articles discussing how we define political parties according to their objectives and how India's political parties might be classed similarly. It contains famous articles by Rajni Kothari, Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), MN Roy, and Myron Weiner, among others.

Pradeep Chhibber and Ken Kollman, The Formation of National Party Systems: Federalism and Party Competition in Canada, the United Kingdom, India, and the United States. (2009) (Princeton University Press). The book makes a substantial addition to the study of federalism and party systems and makes numerous generalizable recommendations outside the federations. By examining long-term constituency-level data from Canada, the United States, India, and the United Kingdom, the authors attempt to construct a compelling argument that the rise and fall of government and administrative authority during periods of centralization and provincialization explains sequential variations in party aggregation. When central governments gain additional authority over increased taxation and expenditures, increased constitutionally allocated authority and control over economic development, candidates will seek a common party label in order to coordinate and ultimately influence policies through collective action. The authors argue that people are more likely to rally behind candidates who bear the connections and labels of national parties. On the other hand, "decentralisation or provincialization creates opportunity for the formation and survival of local or regional parties."

Ajay K. Mehra edited The Party System in India: Emerging Trajectories. Lancer Publishers, New Delhi, 2013). The collection contains eighteen essays and an illuminating introduction by Ajay K. Mehra. The papers and essays by eminent experts in the subject of Indian politics place a premium on nearly all facets of Indian democracy's life and times, as well as its strong link with and affiliation with the parties that comprise the party system.

The book analyses sociopolitical tendencies and then addresses the party system in a way that transcends simple power relationships. While the book conducts an in-depth examination of political parties and the first general elections since 1952, it asserts that it is necessary to contemplate and ponder via the bi-nodal theorization that demonstrates the coalitional strategies, methods, and bargains of political parties.

Two chapters in this edited book, Balveer Arora and K. K. Kailash's The New Party System: Federalized and Binodal and K. K. Kailash's Generational Change in Political Parties and the Party System, examine the affiliation between the Indian party system and federalism. Arora and Kailash explain how links within the party system occur in a multilevel federal polity. The authors believe that political parties attempt, and frequently succeed, in pursuing numerous objectives and strategies within a multi-level institutional context. Sudha Pai edited the Handbook of Indian State Politics: Regions, Parties, and Economic Reforms (Delhi: Oxford University Press 2013). The book is written by famous academic Sudha Pai, who has made significant contributions to the study of Indian state politics, particularly in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The book is organised into four sections that cover various facets of the political process in the country's several states. Pai categorises two significant phenomena in the book's introduction: the establishment of a common arena for state politics and the development of a "relatively autonomous" political arena by each state over time. The articles in this section are divided into four broad categories. State reorganisation; political parties and electoral politics; social movements; and economic reforms are all discussed. The volume's titles focus on the politics of eight states: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu, as well as an essay on the North-East states. A few articles compare multiple states: Rob Jenkins discusses "Special Economic Zones," and E. Sridharan discusses the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Coalition Strategies. Sanjay Kumar discussed "the Survey Evidence for Regionalisation," whereas A. K. Verma discussed "the Decline of Backward Caste Politics in Northern India."

The second section of this book examines electoral politics and regional and national political parties. The final section of this book discusses the politics of social movements, with a particular emphasis on caste-based movements. A. K. Verma asserts that backward caste politics have waned in the Northern states of

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and MP as a result of their elite leadership, heralding the emergence of a new "subaltern" class politics. The book's fourth and concluding half is devoted to economic changes and state politics. This section reproduces Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph's seminal essay on Chandrababu Naidu and India's transition to a federal market economy.

Suhas Palshikar, K.C. Suri, and Yogendra Yadav edited Party Competition in Indian States: Electoral Politics in a Post-Congress Polity. (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2014). The book examines electoral outcomes in twenty-four states from 2008 to 2013, illuminating the complex undercurrents of India's democratic and electoral politics. The several chapters in this volume serve to balance the broad analysis and provide a valuable resource for those interested in a more detailed knowledge of the state's political movements over the period studied. Political watchers and experts feel that the outcome demonstrated a significant countrywide shift in political preferences in favour of national parties over regional parties. Suhas Palshikar, K.C. Suri, and Yogendra Yadav have compiled a study on the CSDS in a single volume that focuses on the 2009 general elections. Though the Congress (INCsubsequent)'s second return to power in 2009 may today be viewed as a minor movement in comparison to the 2014 general elections, numerous observers at the time viewed it as a watershed moment. For the first time in twenty-five years, a government that has served its full term was re-elected. Dr. Manmohan Singh became the first Prime Minister of India since Jawaharlal Nehru to serve a full term after being re-elected for the second time. The state-by-state analysis demonstrates that over the last few years, the alarming and concerning characteristics of the post-Congress polity have been reduced to a stage that may be described as electoral struggle stabilisation.

Why Regional Political Parties? Adam Ziegfeld's Clientelism, Elites, and the Indian Party System (Cambridge University Press, New York, 2016). The author immediately challenges the basic assumptions in the literature on party systems

and in the specific claims regarding the success of regional political parties in India, and then sheds light on India's democratic shortcomings as well. The author provides two consistent objectives that shed light on the accomplishments of regional and state parties and attempt to comprehend the establishment of party systems in areas where party support is based on clientelism rather than ideology and policy. Ziegfeld advances a three-level account, which reads as cross-national, sub-national, and longitudinal, which makes the book helpful for both area studies and comparative politics of party systems.

The author's key point in this book is that regional political parties are effective in India because the country is fundamentally a clientelist democracy, not because of a cohesive regional spirit or a favourable existing environment. The arguments are based on Kanchan Chandra's description of India as a "patronage democracy." If K. Chandra is concerned with how voters choose between competing elites, Ziegfeld is concerned with how elites choose among the many types of parties. As K. Chandra discovered that there is no automatic link between Dalits as a socioeconomic class and support for the BSP, which ostensibly represents the community, Ziegfeld recognises that there is no link between regionalist sentiments or identities and support for regional and state-based parties.

Regional parties have been a subject of much discussion in the literature on the party system. The material discussed previously concentrates on the Congress party's collapse in India and the phases of the Indian party system's fragmentation of political parties. There is also a sizable body of literature on regional and state parties that explores their function in the political system, but mostly in the context of federalism and center-state relations. It does not account for the theoretical underpinnings of the development and evolution of regional parties, their performance variety, or their shifting position in national politics. The purpose of this thesis is to trace the creation of regional and state parties within the context of their theoretical underpinnings and their evolving position

in national politics. The fifth chapter of the thesis, which was added following the 2014 general elections, extensively analyses the changing pattern of the party system, with a particular emphasis on the dynamics of national parties, up to the recent Lok Sabha elections in 2019, making this study more pertinent to the current situation.

The Thesis's Structure

This study work has been organised into six chapters with the aforementioned objectives in mind. The first chapter of the thesis contains a summary of the entire work, including an introduction, a statement of the problem, the study's aims, and the suggested hypothesis and methodology. The second chapter discusses Indian Party Politics: An Overview. This chapter discusses the Indian party system in detail, beginning in 1947, when India gained independence and established itself as a parliamentary democracy. That was also the era during which the Indian party system began to take shape in response to the country's turbulent socioeconomic conditions. This chapter discusses the many stages of the party system in general, with an emphasis on comprehending and differentiating the characteristics of the Indian party system. Existing party system theories primarily explain the party systems of Western democracies and are mostly incapable of explaining the Indian party system.

The third chapter of the thesis examines the origins, development, and expansion of regional and state-based parties through the lens of several perspectives. As previously stated, the unique pattern of the Indian party system does not fit into Western party system typologies. It qualifies similarly in terms of the origins and development of regional parties in India.

The fourth chapter has focused on the role of state and region-based parties in forming the national coalition government(s). The 1989 Lok Sabha election ushered in a sea change in India's party system, particularly at the national level. This chapter examines the pattern of power balance shifts in national politics in detail; we can see the emergence of regional parties in national politics, the

waning of congress hegemony, which exacerbated national politics' instability and chaos, and finally the clustering of regional parties with national parties leading a stable coalition government.

The fifth chapter of the thesis examines the declining influence of regional and state parties in national politics and the different consequences for Indian politics, particularly following the 2014 general elections. The 2014 Lok Sabha election is viewed as a watershed election for these shifts, with scholars referring to it as a'second dominant party system' and other narratives. The BJP-led NDA won an overwhelming majority in this election, decimating its political opponents. The same pattern was repeated in successive general elections, in which a single party won a majority. These shifts also impacted the role of regional parties in national politics, resulting in India's many political transformations.

Chapter VI, Conclusion, will follow. This chapter will summarise the thesis and highlight the major findings of the research, followed by suggestions. The chapter will examine the achievement of the thesis's objectives as stated in Chapter I. Logical conclusions will be drawn in accordance with the premise and theoretical framework given in the thesis's opening chapter.

Theoretical Concepts

Numerous viewpoints exist on the genesis of regional political parties in various political systems. The two major axes are sociostructural characteristics and organisational and institutional aspects. Lipset and Rokkan initially formulated the social cleavages theory in the context of the evolution of the European Party System. Additionally, it established the fundamental model for analysing election behaviour and party systems throughout the world. However, concerns have been expressed about the theory's applicability to underdeveloped/developing countries. However, the theory of social cleavages was unable to account for short-term variations in support for regional and regionalist parties. In comparison to the regional parties' support bases, the social

fault lines are steady. This is the theory's primary flaw, as it fails to account for relatively short-term variations in support for regional and regionalist parties by appealing to significantly more stable social divisions over time. Another point that this line of research frequently under-specifies is how political elites and parties determine which cleavages to emphasise and why.

Several of these inadequacies are addressed by literature that stresses organizational-institutional aspects in explaining the formation and durability of regional parties. This perspective emphasises the growth of smaller regional and regionalist parties and the resulting divergence of subnational party systems from one another and from the national party system. It centres its explanatory models on the organisational and institutional dimensions of politics. The institutionalist perspective examines the effect of government systems (Presidentialism vs. Parliamentarism) on party aggregation. According to this theory, presidential systems of government, by requiring candidates to secure electoral majorities in order to attain the highest position, stimulate the formation of national parties capable of securing electoral victories in direct presidential elections. Another school of thought argues that within the category of parliamentary systems of government, countries with bicameral legislatures will likely see lower levels of party aggregation and the emergence of more and possibly stronger regional parties, as the second chambers, even or especially if indirectly elected by a state legislature, as in the case of India, can provide regionally strong parties with a means of influencing national policies without attempting to establish a national party.

The purpose of this study is to chart the creation and expansion of regional parties in light of these notions. Additionally, it demonstrates that, contrary to some of the literature on party system change in India, there is no uniform pattern of regionalization across states, with each region following its own regionalization trajectory. Rather than that, one of the study's fundamental assumptions is that incentives do indeed alter over time.

CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF INDIA'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

We are all familiar with the concept of democracy as "government by the people, for the people." Direct democracy and indirect or representational democracy are the two primary types of democracy. Direct democracy allows citizens to engage directly in decision-making without the intervention of an elected or appointed official, however such a system is only practicable with a small number of citizens and is not feasible in countries with a huge population and a large territory. Indirect or representative democracy refers to the process through which voters elect representatives to write the government's laws on their behalf.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

The fundamental concept of democracy dates all the way back to ancient Greece, when the populace engaged in 'direct democracy,' in which they participated in the government's decision-making process. It evolved into a popular type of government as a representative or indirect democracy' as modern governments advanced. The intellectual journey toward a very limited and unclear definition of democracy begins with John Locke's concept of limited and responsible government (proposed in his book "Two Treaties of Government"), in which he rejects the Machiavellian and Hobbesian systems of 'absolutism[1]. Democracy is a system of government founded on some critical and fundamental principles and institutional arrangements for governing, such as liberty and equality. Another value that fundamentally distinguishes democratic administration from all other types is that citizens elect their representatives, and every individual citizen residing within a nation-territorial state's limits has an equal right to vote in representative elections. Participation of the populace is a fundamental institutional framework of modern representative

democracies, enabled by free, fair, and frequent elections. In 'Essay on Government,' James Mill argued that even the'representatives' should not have absolute authority and that there should be'sufficiently frequent re-election.' The party system is a cornerstone of an elected'representative form of government,' serving as a 'connector between electors and elected officials.' Without the existence and operation of political parties, modern political representational democracies cannot be imagined. Parties equip citizens with the ability to act politically and provide them with the opportunity to influence politics and political decisions. They articulate the interests and demands of all segments of society and are required to take positions on all topics of public concern, and elections are contested on the basis of rivalry between these parties and issues.

In India, political parties are either a National Party or a State Party. To be considered a National Party, a political party has to be recognised in four or more states and to be either the ruling party or the opposition in those states. Following its formation in 1885, the Indian National Congress (INC) - and its successor of 1978 - was the dominant political party in India. For its first six decades, its focus was on campaigning for Indian independence from Britain. Since independence in 1947, it has sought to be the governing party of the nation with repeated success. Indeed, so dominant was Congress at both national and state levels that it created what was called "the Congress system". As a result, for most of its democratic history, the Lok Sabha has been dominated by the Indian Congress Party which has been in power for a great deal of the time. However, unlike Japan where the Liberal Democrat Party has been in power almost continuously [click here], Congress has had (usually short) periods out of power, between 1977-1980, 1989-1991 and 1996-2004. Then, the 2014 election was a disaster for the Congress Party. It did not simply lose power; it was shattered at the polls winning a mere 44 seats. In the 2019 election, it only

marginally improved its seat count to 52. Clearly the Congress Party's historic role as leader of post-independence India is over. The original Congress Party espoused moderate socialism and a planned, mixed economy. However, its spin-off and successor, Congress (I) - 'I' in honour of Indira Gandhi- now supports deregulation, privatisation and foreign investment.

While the Congress Party has historically dominated Indian politics, the leadership of the Congress Party in turn has been dominated by one family: Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, served for 17 years; his daughter Indira Gandhi later became Prime Minister; his grandson Rajiv Gandhi was also Prime Minister; currently the widow of Rajiv Gandhi, the Italian-born Sonia Gandhi holds the position as Congress President although she refused to accept the post of Prime Minister in the last Congress government; and her son Rahul Gandhi is a Member of Parliament, while her daughter Priyanka Gandhi is an active political campaigner. The Indian Congress Party is the leading party in the Centre-Left political coalition called the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) which embraces a total of 36 parties. In the 2019 election, the UPA had 91 seats. The other major, and now in the Governments in centre and many states, is the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Founded on the remnants of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) created in 1951 as the political wing of the the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the BJS was formed in 1980. It represents itself as a champion of the socio-religious cultural values of the country's Hindu majority and advocates conservative social policies and strong national defence. The BJP, in alliance with several other parties, led the government between 1998-2004. In the election of 2014, it stormed to victory, winning 282 seats, an overall majority in parliament. In the election of 2019, it increasing this tally to 303 seats. The leader of the BJP is a controversial figure. Narendra Modi is a lifelong member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) or National Volunteer

Movement, a vast and and influential Hindu rivalist conservative movement which has been banned three times in India. The Bharatiya Janata Party is the leading party in the Right-wing political coalition called the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). When it was originally founded in 1998, there were 13 parties in the coalition but currently there are 43. In the 2019 election, the NDA commanded 355 seats. The official ideology of the BJP is integral humanism, first formulated by Deendayal Upadhyaya in 1965. The party expresses a commitment to Hindutva, and its policy has historically reflected Hindu nationalist positions. The BJP advocates social conservatism and a foreign policy centred on nationalist principles. Two other - much smaller - national alliances are a grand alliance of regional parties and a left-front of communist-leaning parties. In a democracy where a significant proportion of the electorate is illiterate, the use of recognisable symbols for political parties is important. The Indian Congress Party is represented by a hand, while the Bharatiya Janata Party is represented by a lotus.

The BJP's Hindutva ideology has been reflected in many of its government policies. It supports the construction of the Ram Temple at the disputed site of the Babri Mosque. This issue was its major poll plank in the 1991 general elections. However, the demolition of the mosque during a BJP rally in 1992 resulted in a backlash against it, leading to a decline of the temple's prominence in its agenda. The education policy of the NDA government reorganised the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and tasked it with extensively revising the textbooks used in Indian schools. Various scholars have stated that this revision, especially in the case of history textbooks, was a covert attempt to "saffronise" Indian history. The NDA government introduced Vedic astrology as a subject in college curricula, despite opposition from several leading scientists.[120]

Taking a position against what it calls the "pseudo-secularism" of the Congress party, the BJP instead supports "positive secularism". Vajpayee laid out the BJP's interpretation of Mahatma Gandhi's doctrine of Sarva Dharma Sama Bhava and contrasted it with what he called European secularism. He had said that Indian secularism attempted to see all religions with equal respect, while European secularism was independent of religion, thus making the former more "positive".The BJP supports a uniform civil code, which would apply a common set of personal laws to every citizen regardless of their personal religion, replacing the existing laws which vary by religious community. Historian Yogendra Malik claims this ignores the differential procedures required to protect the cultural identity of the Muslim minority. The BJP favoured, and later enacted the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution of India, which granted a greater degree of autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir in recognition of the unusual circumstances surrounding its accession to the Indian Union.

The BJP opposes illegal immigration into India from Bangladesh. The party states that this migration, mostly in the states of Assam and West Bengal, threatens the security, economy and stability of the country. Academics have pointed out that the BJP refers to Hindu migrants from Bangladesh as refugees, and reserves the term "illegal" for Muslim migrants. Academic Michael Gillan perceived it as an attempt to use an emotive issue to mobilise Hindu sentiment in a region where the party has not been historically successful. The party later became the party of government in Assam. In 2013, the Supreme Court of India reinstated the controversial Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which, among other things, criminalises homosexuality. There was a popular outcry, although clerics, including Muslim religious leaders, stated that they supported the verdict. BJP president Rajnath Singh said that the party supported Section 377, because it believed that homosexuality was unnatural, though

the party softened the stance after its victory in the 2014 general elections. Senior party members including Arun Jaitley and Harsh Vardhan openly support the rights of gender and sexual minorities in India. Vanathi Srinivasan, a BJP leader from Tamil Nadu, launched the first book on LGBTQIA and Genderqueer in Tamil penned by Gopi Shankar Madurai. However, other leading party figures, such as Subramanian Swamy, were strongly critical of the decision by the Supreme Court to strike down Section 377 in Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India.

The BJP's economic policy has changed considerably since its founding. There is a significant range of economic ideologies within the party. In the 1980s, like the Jana Sangh, it reflected the thinking of the RSS and its affiliates. It supported swadeshi (the promotion of indigenous industries and products) and a protectionist export policy. However, it supported internal economic liberalisation, and opposed the state-driven industrialisation favoured by the Congress. During the 1996 elections, the BJP shifted its stance away from protectionism and towards globalisation; its election manifesto recommended increasing foreign investment in priority sectors, while restricting it in others. When the party was in power in 1998, it shifted its policy even further in favour of globalisation. The tenure of the NDA saw an unprecedented influx of foreign companies in India. This was criticised by the left parties and the BJP's affiliates (the RSS and the Swadeshi Jagran Manch). The communist parties said that the BJP was attempting to appease the World Bank and the United States government through its neoliberal policies. Similarly, the RSS stated that the BJP was not being true to its swadeshi ideology.

The two NDA governments in the period 1998–2004 introduced significant deregulation and privatisation of government-owned enterprises. It also introduced tariff-reducing measures. These reforms built off of the initial economic liberalisation introduced by the P. V. Narasimha Rao-led Congress government in

the early 1990s. India's GDP growth increased substantially during the tenure of the NDA. The 2004 campaign slogan India Shining was based on the party's belief that the free market would bring prosperity to all sectors of society. After its unexpected defeat, commentators said that it was punished for neglecting the needs of the poor and focusing too much on its corporate allies. This shift in the economic policies of the BJP was also visible in state governments, especially in Gujarat, where the BJP held power for 16 years. Modi's government, in power from 2002 to 2014, followed a strongly neo-liberal agenda, presented as a drive towards development. Its policies have included extensive privatisation of infrastructure and services, as well as a significant rollback of labour and environmental regulations. While this was praised by the business community, commentators criticised it as catering to the BJP's upper-class constituency instead of the poor.

Modi has been described as taking a more economically populist approach on healthcare and agricultural policy. Modi's government has also been described as taking a more protectionist turn on international trade during his second term, withdrawing from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership talks and introducing the 2020 Atmanirbhar Bharat economic plan, which emphasises national self-sufficiency. However, Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar has rejected accusations that Atmanirbhar Bharat is a protectionist initiative, while himself criticizing India's past free trade agreements for the "damaging impact they have had on India's manufacturing".Similarly, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu has also disputed the initiative's protectionism, instead stating that it meant "adopting a pragmatic development strategy that would enable the country to recognise and capitalise on its inherent strengths".

CHAPTER 3

EMERGENCE OF INDIA'S REGIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES

India has always had a lot of different languages, religions, ethnic groups, cultures, and geographical areas. India is called the country of many languages, many cultures, many ethnic groups, and many religions because of this. The Indian nation is built on its many different cultures. India keeps its national unity despite its many differences. Religion, language, region, caste, race, and the ever-growing gap between the elites and the masses all show how different India's social and geographical structure is. The political institutions of a country depend on the kind of society it has, how different it is socially and geographically, and how divided it is into regions. India's system of many different political parties shows how different the country is and is an important part of how its democratic system works.

Regionalism in India: Its Nature and Context:

Regionalism in everyday use means particularism or devotion to a certain area. The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences says that regionalism is a form of federalism and a stage between decentralisation and federalism in organisations. It has a lot of complicated parts of modern political and cultural life, most of which have to do with the different minority groups, local self-government, administrative decentralisation and autonomy, the cult of the place where one is born, and local devotion. Regionalism and particularism are not always linked together. From the point of view of a regular person, regionalism can be seen as a reaction to any oppressive actions taken by the central government. Still, the idea or feeling of regionalism can't be looked at only from the point of view of political control or legislative and executive government. Most of the time, regionalist views came

about because of a mix of different historical, geographical, ethnic, racial, economic, and/or religious factors or problems.

The word "regionalism" comes from the word "region," and it is a phenomenon that has many different parts. Webster's Dictionary says that regionalism is being aware of and loyal to a specific area with a similar population. A region is an area where the people are mostly the same. They have the same physical and cultural traits, which are usually different from those of the nearby areas. This region can be brought together in a way that makes people more aware of their own customs, ideas, and goals, giving them a sense of identity that is different from the rest of the country. The word "regionalism" refers to putting local ideas into action as a belief or a social movement, which can lead to planning for the region. The same can also be said about the systematic task of dividing up and analysing the areas that don't have official borders.

From a theoretical point of view, regionalism is often described as both a doctrine and a trend, which can mean a number of things, such as[2]:

- In a country where administrative and political power is very concentrated and centralised, regionalism is the idea that power should be given to different areas based on their needs.
- It is also a "sociocultural countermovement" that fights against imposing any one ideology, cultural pattern, or language in the name of bringing the country together.
- It also wants to give subcultural regions more freedom by making them ask for more self-government within the country's federal system. So, it is also a political movement against the government.

- It shows the political goals of the groups that live in a "specified subcultural region," which makes the tendency toward separatism even stronger.

The idea of regionalism also has some goals, such as [3].

- Rebuilding the local culture and the subcultures of a country or nation with many different identities.
- Both administrative and political power should be spread out.
- Creating such principles will help solve the conflict between the Centre and the States and the hostility between subcultural provinces.
- Keeping the political and economic balance between the Union, the governments of the states, and subcultural regions.

Since independence, political participation and economic growth have moved faster, which has made it easier for different groups to speak out. Pressures and counterpressures from different organised interests keep overloading the system and putting the fragile fabric of national unity at risk.

Significance of Regional / State Parties:

Different ways have been used to describe regional parties. Regional parties are only in one state and have strong ties to regional goals and problems. The party only has supporters in that state because it identifies with a certain region, culture, language, religion, etc[4]. But the Election Commission of India doesn't tell the difference between regional parties and state parties. When deciding what kind of party it will be, two things are taken into account, which are: "The number of states where it is popular among voters and how many votes it got in the State Assembly and Lok Sabha elections." India's Election Commission puts political parties into three groups: National Party, State Party, and Registered (Unrecognised Party). ECI says that the National Party is the one that meets the following criteria[5].

"If a political party is recognised in four or more states, it will be called a "National Party" all over India, but only as long as it continues to meet the requirements for recognition in four or more states based on the results of any subsequent general election to the House of the People or to the Legislative Assembly of any state.

ECI says that State Party is[6]:

"If a political party is recognised in less than four states, it should be called a "State Party" in those states, but only as long as it continues to meet the requirements for recognition based on the results of any subsequent general election to the House of the People or, as the case may be, to the Legislative Assembly of the State in those states.

Notably, a party becomes the state party if it gets at least 6 percent of valid votes and wins at least two assembly seats in a state election, or if it gets at least 6 percent of valid votes and wins one Lok Sabha seat in a general election. Some scholars say this isn't good enough, and they want to label these parties as regional parties based on religion-cultural identity, ethnic assertion, and the expansion of regional interests.

Ascent of Regional/State Parties:

Regionalism has been around in India since ancient times, but it has never been shown with as much energy and effort as it is in modern India. Even though there were divisions between the provinces and the people during colonial times, and some scholars blame this on colonialism, the anti-colonial struggle was able to include the regional forces and their demands. The Indian National Congress was a key part of this process because it was an umbrella party that claimed to speak for all the different parts of the country.

After independence, the growth of regional parties has been a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon that shouldn't be seen "simply as a result or side effect of regionalism" but as a phenomenon in its own right. [7] Regional differences don't just turn into party systems on their own. Their change into a political party depends

on what their political representatives do and how the institutions support them. In this case, political decentralisation is an important rule. Political devolution encourages political leaders to start regional political parties, and voters support them, because regional parties have a better chance of winning in state legislatures than in the national legislature[8].

Spirit of regionalism, even if it doesn't line up with state lines, isn't very useful if it isn't organised, channelled, and voiced by political parties. And most, but not all, of this job is done by the regional parties[9]. Regional political parties are becoming more important in Indian politics, which can also be seen from the fact that they are getting more votes. In the Lok Sabha elections of 1984, all regional parties got 11.2% of the vote as a whole. In the Lok Sabha elections of 1989, they got 27.1% of the vote. Except for the 1991 Lok Sabha elections, when regional parties only got 21.1% of the votes, regional parties have gotten close to one-third of the votes in the last few elections[10].

Motives for the Formation of These Parties:

India has been a country with a lot of different cultures, religions, and languages for a long time. It is natural for a country like India to have sub-national goals, which have been shown through different social and political demands since independence. There are things that have a big effect on how the regional parties in India came to be.

Cultural Difference:

The Indian civilization is different from others because it is both stable and diverse, has a long history, and has a lot of different parts. This cultural pluralism also influenced India's political culture. According to Lucian W. Pye, "political culture is a set of attitudes, beliefs, and feelings that give a political process order and meaning and that provide the basic assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system." 11 The country's political discourse has grown in different ways

in different regions and states, which has helped different regional and state-based parties grow. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) in Tamil Nadu, Akali's in Punjab, and Trinamool Congress in West Bengal are all examples of different paths of political discourse.

Regional Inequality:

India has a wide range of climates, landscapes, natural resources, and other things that make it a very different place. After getting rid of the colonial government, development was a huge challenge for the government because the country's economy was in bad shape. The government tried to fix this problem by centralising planning, but it didn't help fix the problem of regional differences, and many parts of the country stayed behind. Many parts of India have had relatively higher levels of economic growth, while other parts have continued to have low levels of economic growth. This difference between the regions has also led to the growth of some regional parties. Local leaders often use the people's sense of being left out and not having enough to form regional parties that claim to represent the people's regional interests. One example of this is the "Asom Gana Parishad," which was started over the same issue.

Concentration of Power:

India's government is set up in a way that is both federal and unitary. In Indian federalism, the central government has a bigger role most of the time. After India's independence, the Congress Party formed the central government and almost all of the state governments. In order to keep the country from falling apart, the constitution has a lot of centralised rules. Indian federalism became even more centralised when the Congress took control of the centre and the states. 12 Since the country became independent, there has always been a call for a decentralised system, which has grown stronger as regional parties have grown. As a reaction to this centralised way of running things, many regional parties popped up and made the

center-state relationships their main focus. The DMK, the TDP (Telugu Desam Party), the AGP (Asom Gana Parishad), the Akali Dal, and some other parties have used an anti-centralist strategy to win support in their own states. Even though people's views of these parties have changed since 1996, because they no longer work toward anti-centrism and secessionism, they still want more freedom in center-state relations. Since 1999, national and regional parties have shared power more, and regional parties have made their demands known in national politics. The success of the coalition governments of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) shows that regional parties are becoming more powerful in national politics.

Factionalism and Fragmentation within Indian Political Parties:

In the Indian party system, factionalism and splits between political parties are not new. Some national political parties got groups of people who didn't agree with the party's policies. This caused the party to split even more. Several regional and state-based parties have grown because of factionalism and splits in political parties. Trinamool Congress, Kerala Congress, Janata Dal, Bangla Congress, Janata Dal Secular, Janata Dal (United), PMK (Pattali Makkal Katchi), Lok Jan Shakti Party, BJD (Biju Janata Dal), Forward Bloc, AIADMK, Oriya Congress, and Tamil Manila Congress all started out as factions of other parties.

Destination of these Parties inside the Indian States:

In different states, these parties have taken different paths. In the middle of the 1960s, there was a strong wave of regionalism in the Southern states, which led to the creation of a number of political parties. Since the mid-1960s, all of Tamil Nadu's politics have been based on the state or region. In contrast, the Northern states didn't start to get involved until much later. Most of the North-Eastern states have been run by national parties. Congress, in particular, has been in charge of almost all of these states, and the rise of regional and smaller parties has been based on ethnicity[13].

When you divide the Indian states by region, you can see how the different regional parties have changed over time.

Southern States:

Andhra Pradesh is one of the most important Congress party strongholds. The Congress party has run the state without any problems for almost 30 years. Since 1978, the state has seen a unique and important event that has had a lasting effect on its politics. People were getting more and more upset with the Congress Party, which was in power. There was no good alternative to the Congress Party, and the opposition parties couldn't compete in national politics. This made it easy for a regional party to form in the state. In March 1982, the movie star N.T. Rama Rao started a new political party, which marked the beginning of a new time in the state's politics. Andhra Pradesh saw the beginning of the rise of regional parties, and the Telugu Desam Party was able to split Andhra politics away from the Congress.

N.T. Rama Rao was a member of the powerful Kamma peasant caste from the state's coastal area. As an actor, he was very well-liked by most people, which helped him reach a lot of people in a short amount of time. He talked about "Telugu Honor" and promised that the government would be honest. In the 1983 Assembly elections, the Telugu Desam Party, which had only been around for nine months, did very well, getting 45.92% of the vote and winning 201 of the 289 seats that were up for election. The Congress Party only won 60 seats, which was the lowest number in the state's political history. Rao was sworn in as the first leader of Andhra Pradesh who was not from the Congress party. With this win, the Congress could no longer control the state.

During the 1990s, the party also showed up in national politics. Chandrababu Naidu quickly switched his support from the United Front to the NDA so that he could keep that job. Since the beginning, the TDP has been a platform for peasant OBCs in Andhra Pradesh to come together, even though the idea of OBC upliftment is not

talked about much[15]. Because of N. T. Rama Rao's charisma and policies that helped the poor, the TDP was accepted by poor and rural voters, especially women. SCs and OBCs also helped to make it happen. NTR's original social coalition was made up of middle-class farmers from backward castes. However, by 1998, some backward castes and poor voters had switched their support to the BJP. But the TDP's strong case for regional developmentalism can only be understood in the context of the rise of the Kammas, who are peasant OBCs. This group had gained a large amount of economic power and, as a result, control over the state's economy. That was the main reason why this group was able to meet the demand for regionalism. Chandrababu Naidu's policies were also appealing to this group because they were focused on technology.

Even though the TDP changed its policies after the N.T.R., it has been able to keep its support base the same as it was before. It has support from people of all ages, but more from women than from men. Its base is mostly in rural areas. In cities, less than 30% of people support it, and those who can't read or write are more likely to vote for it. As we've already talked about, Kamma voters are the TDP's main supporters, and more than 70% of Kamma voters back the TDP. But its success doesn't just depend on the Kammas. It also has a lot of support from tribal people and a lot of support from peasant OBC people, which helped the Telugu Desam win the election.

In contrast to neighbouring states, the people of Karnataka did not give regional parties a chance to take over the government. There have been a lot of regional parties that started out strong in the state, but except for a few, they all fizzled out. Dissident Congressmen like S. Chenniah, T. Subramanya, and Gnana Mukhi Anna Rao decided in April 1965 to start the Janatha Paksha, the state's first regional party. In January 1967, people like H.M. Channabasavappa, Avala Reddy, and others who had been in Congress before started the Jana Congress. Veteran Congress leader

H.K. Veeranna Gowda, V. Venkatappa, and N. Hutchamasthi Gowda all left the party in the same month, and Veeranna Gowda said he would bring back the old Mysore Congress. All of these parties didn't have any effect on the elections that came after. Even parties started by ex-Prime Ministers did not last long. K. Hanumanthiah started the Surajya Party in September 1977. In April 1982, Devaraj Urs started the Karnataka Kranti Ranga. In January 1983, many of the party's candidates were elected to the state Assembly using the symbol of the Janata Party. But when the Karnataka Kranti Ranga joined the Janata party, it soon stopped being what it was. Gundu Rao and S. Bangarappa, two other former Chief Ministers of Karnataka, also started their own parties. Gundu Rao's party was called Congress (Indira Gandhi), and S. Bangarappa's was called Karnataka Congress. Gundu Rao's party did not do well in the elections, so he quickly went back to the Congress. In December 1994, Bangarappa's party won ten seats in the Assembly. But he later went back to the Congress as well. Ramakrishna Hegde started his own party, Lok Shakti, after he was kicked out of the JD in 1996. In July 1991, this party and a few others came together to form a new group called Janata Dal (U). Yediyurappa and B. Sriramulu were two of the most recent politicians to start regional parties. After a short time, each of their groups merged with the BJP. This could be because of the past, the way society is set up, or the way people think.

After India got its independence in 1947, the state of Madras was renamed Tamil Nadu. In south Indian politics, the regional parties have deep roots that go back to before the freedom movement. Most of the regional movements in the South came about because of the problems and unique features of the country's social, political, economic, and cultural system. The "Self-respect Movement," which was founded in 1925, the "Dravida Kazhagam," which was founded in 1949, the "South Indian Liberal Federation," also known as the "Justice Party," which was founded in 1961, and the "AIADMK," which was founded in 1972, are all examples of regional parties

that raised the issue of Non-Brahmins' ethnic and cultural pride. There were also some local parties, like the Aarsu Kazhagam and the Tamil Desiya Katchi, that said the Tamil culture, language, and movements should be praised.

AIADMK and DMK, two local political parties, have been running the state of Tamil Nadu for a long time. The DMK is a Dravidian party that was started by C.N. Annadurai. It grew out of the Dravid Kazhagam, which was led by Periyar. Since 1989, when Dravidian parties realised that they have the power to form and overthrow national governments, they have become much more influential in national politics. This has completely changed their ideas about politics, and they have started to take an all-Indian and nationalist stance and return to loud regionalist rhetoric. The first is important to show that they have a role in all of India, and the second is important to show that they haven't lost sight of their basic ideology. 16 In the case of DMK, political scientists have found a change in the direction of all Indian nationalism. As a way to find a middle ground, the DMK replaced Sanskrit prayers in temples with Tamil prayers called "Archanas." This pushed Tamil culture in the direction of Hinduism. Devoted Hindus who were not Brahmans but still supported DMK's move were called "Saivites." Most of the time, AIADMK has been quiet about the Dravidian movement's non-Brahman roots. During AIADMK's time in power, the Vinayak cult has grown in Tamil Nadu. In this way, the DMK and the AIADMK both follow the same set of ideas.

Kerala's party system has been different from that of the other Indian Union states[17]. Since 1977, the anti-incumbent factor has been a problem in the state. Since the late 1970s, the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Democratic Front and the Congress-led UDF (United Democratic Front) have been the most powerful political forces in states. Since 1982, these coalitions have taken turns running each of the states. Most of the other political parties in the state, besides the BJP, are part of either of these alliances.

Northern States:

Even before they were free, the North Indian states were involved in politics. It is made up of the states where caste mobilisation happened most, and it is often linked to the "second democratic upsurge." 18 At first, the Congress was in charge of state politics in Punjab, which at the time was made up of Haryana, Chandigarh, and Himachal Pradesh. After the state lines were moved around, politics in the state changed in a big way. Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) started before India got its independence and is one of the oldest regional parties in India. It has become a major party in Punjab. In the early 1920s, the main reason the party was made was to give the traditional Sikh religious community control over the "Gurudwaras," which are places of worship for the Sikh community. The Akali Dal was a very important part of the fight to make Punjab a separate state where most of the people are Sikh. The party led the state's coalition government in 1967 and 1977. In 1985, it was able to make its government. During the 1980s, religion became a big part of politics in Punjab. However, when normal politics and the democratic process returned in the 1990s, problems of regional identity and the financial interests of different social classes came back to the fore. 19 As the 1980s went on, the Akali Dal slowly split into different groups. In the elections of 1989, there were three Akali Dal groups that ran, and they won a total of seven seats.

The National Conference is a regional/state party with its headquarters in Jammu and Kashmir. Even though most of its members are Muslims, the party did not back the All-India Muslim League (Muslim League) during the independence movement. Instead, it joined the Indian National Congress. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was the party's most important politician, and after he died in 1982, his son Farooq Abdullah became the face of the party. Jawaharlal Nehru was good friends with Sheikh Abdullah. Even though they were friends, Nehru still put Sheikh Abdullah in jail because he was afraid that the "Lion of Kashmir" would try to get Jammu and

Kashmir to be independent. Sheikh Abdullah was able to make a deal with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the end, and in 1975 he became the Chief Minister of J&K. During the 1980s, NC was still Jammu and Kashmir's most popular party, and for the most part, it was able to run the state. In 1967, NC won one of Jammu and Kashmir's six parliamentary seats. In 1971, the party didn't win any Lok Sabha seats, but it did win two in 1977 and three in 1980, 1984, and 1989. But because of allegations of election fraud in the assembly elections of 1987, the NC lost a lot of support. The National Conference and the Congress worked together to win this election (I). Farooq Abdullah's state government, which came after his, was accused of a lot of corruption, which also made people less likely to vote for it. During Sheikh Abdullah's time in power, the National Conference won elections with a large majority. However, the party's popularity began to slowly decline, which led to its loss of power and helped the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and the Congress win. NC made a lot of mistakes over and over again, which turned off the common people and made them less likely to support it. The NC's biggest mistake was joining forces with the BJP, which had never before had more support in Kashmir valley. Omar Abdullah admitted in the Indian Parliament that the party's continued alliance with the BJP, even after the Gujarat riots in 2002, was the last nail in its coffin[20]. In 1990, when the government of Jammu and Kashmir was thrown out and the President's rule was declared, neither the National Conference nor Farooq Abdullah had much support from the general public. Since the President stayed in power until 1996 and there were no elections, it is hard to know how much support National Conference had during this time. Still, it is no longer a secret that the general public does not trust the National Conference or Farooq Abdullah.

Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) is another important regional party in the state. It shared power with BJP in the state. With the rise of the PDP in 2002, party politics

moved into their third phase, and for the first time, the single party's control of the Assembly was challenged[21].

Uttar Pradesh (UP) is a state with a larger population than Brazil, Pakistan, or Russia. It has produced several of India's Prime Ministers and sends one out of every seven members of India's Lok Sabha. UP has been one of the main battlegrounds of India's electoral politics, where new players have emerged not only to compete for political power but also to replace the National Parties as the ruling parties. 22 It is the only state in India where the four largest parties compete for votes. In recent years, the main competition has been between the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) led by Mayawati and the Samajwadi Party (SP) led by Akhilesh Yadav.

BSP was started in 1985 as a regional party that was mostly backed by Dalits. Over time, it became a national party. The Janata Dal is the party that gave birth to the Samajwadi Party. Since the party couldn't grow its base outside of Uttar Pradesh, the party is now seen as a political party based in the state. Samajwadi Party has tried hard to spread its power outside of UP, especially in Maharashtra, where they are counting on voters who speak Hindi and Muslims in Mumbai. During the 1990s, SP was an important part of the political changes in Mumbai. SP is seen as a party of both Yadavs and Muslims in its home state of UP. Since the BSP is appealing to a large number of Dalit voters in Uttar Pradesh, the SPs' rise has hit a wall. The success of the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, on the other hand, comes from the fact that it was able to keep its base in places like the RJD (Rashtriya Janata Dal) during the turbulent 1990s. In the same way that BSP and SP were fighting hard for Dalit votes in UP, SP and BJP are now fighting for OBC votes in UP[23].

The way people in Bihar think about society and politics is mostly based on castes, which are always fighting for social dominance and political power. RJD and Samata Party are the two main state parties in Bihar. The Janata Dal is where both of these groups got their start. The main idea behind the RJD is to help the OBCs get ahead

and improve their lives. The Samata Party is known for its anti-Lalu campaign, which is mostly about issues of good governance. 24 Except for the Shiv Sena, the Samata Party is one of the BJP's earliest allies from 1996 on. Samata Party's main backers are the Kurmis, who are farmers and part of Bihar's OBC group.

The RJD was started by Lalu Prasad in 1998. In 1999, the RJD formed a coalition with the Congress party, which did not go over well in Congress's home state of Bihar. Lalu Prasad brought together OBCs, SCs, and Muslims in Bihar to form a strong alliance. But the RJD was not able to make the OBC support happen. Lalu Prasad Yadav's leadership and guidance have been linked to the steady rise of Yadavs in Bihar. This is because the party is mostly made up of Yadavs, who make up about 11% of the population of the state.

Most people think of the 1990s as a time of political upheaval because the parties' political bases changed during that time. Only a few political groups or parties were able to keep a certain number of their core voters. Notably, RJD has been able to keep its core voter base during the turbulent 1990s. This is because it has a wide range of supporters, and the accusation that it is only a Yadav party fell flat. For example, in the general elections of 1999, RJD was able to get support from voters of different ages and levels of education. Voters who were 46 or older were only slightly more likely to vote for RJD, while younger voters were less likely to do so. Also, contrary to what most people think, the party got more support from people who could read than from people who couldn't read. Rashtriya Janata Dal got fewer votes from women than from people from the other community. RJD has had more support in cities than in the countryside. In 1999, almost 17% of voters in rural areas chose RJD, while 32% of voters in cities chose RJD. The Rashtriya Janata Dal has support from a wide range of communities, including Yadavs, Low OBCs, Muslims, and SCs. Rashtriya Janata Dal did lose some support in different social groups, but

not as much as was feared. A lot of polls and data sets from the 1998 general elections also point to the same plan of OBC, SC, and Muslim support for RJD.

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It's important to note that almost a third of RJD voters still come from the lower OBC community. On the other hand, the Samata Party seems to have gained from working with the Bharatiya Janata Party. The people who vote for and support the Samata Party are a mix of upper castes and Rajputs (together they make up 30% of Samata Party votes), as well as lower OBCs (who make up 1/3 of Samata votes). So, the Samata Party is definitely made up of people from both the upper and lower castes. The fact that 65 percent of Rajput voters and almost 40 percent of upper caste voters choose the Samata Party is very interesting. Based on the political description,

this showed that the upper castes do not see the Samata Party as an OBC party like they do Lalu's RJD. Voters in rural areas are more likely to vote for the Samata Party than voters in cities. Like RJD, the Samata Party is more popular with male voters, and this is an interesting fact.

Only Maharashtra in India's central and western states has a strong presence of regional parties. Bal Thackeray started the Shiv Sena in 1966. His main goal was to help the "Sons of the Soil," which were mostly the young people of Maharashtra. Shiv Sena is a political party on the right, and it stays true to its Hindutva beliefs. During the 1980s, Shiv Sena grew, and during the 1990s, it became well-known on a national level. 25. Sena has been blamed for starting several riots in Maharashtra, especially the riots in Mumbai in the late 1960s, the riots in Bhiwandi in 1984, and the riots in Mumbai in 1992-93. Uddhav Thackeray, Balasaheb's youngest son, is now in charge of the day-to-day running of SHS. Balasaheb was in charge of the party for many years and left a big mark on Maharashtra's politics. Because its political base is shrinking, the party has turned to communal and regional extremism. However, this has made the party worse off.

West Bengal: Politics in West Bengal have always been very contentious. In the 1960s, when Left-leaning groups started to show up in state elections and other areas of mass politics, commentators asked important questions about the goals and effects of various Left-leaning policies. When the Communist Party of India broke up in 1964[26], the first stage of the debate began. The AITMC broke away from the Congress party on January 1, 1998. For 20 years, Mamata Banerjee was a member of the Congress party. She took on the CPM in West Bengal, where they had been in power for 30 years straight and seemed too strong to take on.

Localized forces were the foundation of Non-Congress politics in Orissa. From 1967 to 1971, the government was mostly put together by the Jana Sangh, the Jharkhand Party, and the Utkal Congress. However, the Swatantra Party also played an

important role in state politics. It could be said that the nature of the middle class and upper castes in Orissa's political elites has also helped to make Oriya politics more based on regions. 27 Even though Nandini Satpathy and Biju Patnaik joined a non-Congress coalition at the national level, their politics at the state level still revolved around regional issues. Under Biju Patnaik's leadership, the Orissa branch of the Janata Dal has been known for how well it works on its own. It joined the pan-India party mostly to make it easier for a regional leader to get into national politics. After Biju Patnaik died, the Orissa JD unit quickly fell apart, and its leader, Naveen Patnaik, quickly joined the pan-Indian BJP party. This decision was made because of two things: first, the logic of anti-Congressism led the new leader to the BJP, and second, the party wanted to do its part on a national level. People thought that the fall of the United Front would make it hard for a regional or even a state-based party to get to the centre of national politics unless it joined with the BJP. So, Naveen Patnaik has tied anti-Congress politics in Orissa to himself, which basically means to his political party as the key centre of anti-Congressism. However, political analysts say that BJD's position as an important centre of anti-Congress politics in the state could be weakened by BJP over time[28].

North-Eastern States - (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura):

When the North-Eastern region is treated as a single unit for political, administrative, or geographical reasons, the fact that it is made up of many different places is often overlooked. In the NE states, there are a lot of differences and differences that are mostly based on language, race, political views, religion, and geographical features. Each state has its own characteristics. But despite these differences, most of the people who live there and the states have come to agree on how the union government's policies affect this region. Every ethnic group tries to be separate from

other ethnic groups and has its own worldview, so they all want autonomy, whether it's in the constitution or not.

The largest state in India's North-Eastern region is Arunachal Pradesh. But the population of about a million people is very diverse in terms of culture, language, and religion[29]. In 1987, Arunachal became a state. Before that, the first election for the Parliament was in 1977, and the first election for the Legislative Assembly was a year later. In the United States, ethnic identities have had a big impact on election results because voters choose candidates based on their ethnic background rather than their political party. 30. It is also thought that the ethnic differences in Arunachal Pradesh led to the rise of regional and state-based parties, each of which has its own history. People's Party of Arunachal was formed in 1977. Its goal was to find out what the local people wanted and what they needed, as well as to protect the unique culture of Arunachal Pradesh and its many tribes. "Arunachal Congress" was the second regional effort in the form of a political party. It was the result of the native people of Arunachal becoming more politically aware of the issues of immigration and settlement[31].

Assam has always been a stronghold for the Congress. Since 1952, Congress has been the most popular party in Assam's election history. The first big problem happened after the elections for the Assembly in 1978, when a government that didn't belong to Congress took over. Since 1985, the multi-ethnic nature of the state's electoral politics has become clearer, and the Congress's single-party dominance has given way to a multi-party system with a lot of political fragmentation[32].

The Asom Gana Parishad was formed in October 1985. It was a result of the Assam movement against the "invasion" of foreigners and the "exploitation" of Assam's natural resources by those "from the outside." United Minorities Front was made to deal with these things that AGP did. The All Assam Students Union (AASU), a powerful student group in Assam, led a well-known movement against refugees in

Assam. The protests brought attention to the Assamese desire for "self-identity," and they opened the door for a new group of leaders and a new political party, the AGP. Two all-India parties compete for power in the state of Meghalaya. Even though politics are always changing, the state has never had a mid-term election. Congress and BJP are the two national parties with the most members. Even though there have always been and will always be many regional or state-level parties. Only the United Democratic Party (UDP) has a large number of supporters in Meghalaya, and both its number of seats and its share of the votes went up in 2008.

From the Advisory Council to the Territorial Council to the first state Assembly elections in March 1972, Manipur had come a long way. It was mostly about local issues like economic growth, unemployment, the need for better transportation, and the role of political parties in the push for statehood. In 1972, Territorial Assembly became a full-fledged state, with a governor in charge. Congress's control over state politics ended with the 1972 election, which also saw the rise of a regional party as an alternative to Congress[33].

A group of people who didn't agree with the Indian National Congress started the Manipur Peoples Party (MPP) on December 26, 1968. In February 2007, the party won five of the state's 60 seats. MPP brought about a lot of political changes in the state of Manipur in order to protect the state's territorial integrity. MPP's main slogan was to protect the identity and ethnicity of the Manipuri people, who, the party members said, were in danger because of the large number of "outsiders."

Regional parties like the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Naga Nationalist Organisation have been in charge of most of Nagaland for a long time (NNO). The first time the Congress won an election in the state was in 1982. From 1993 to 2003, the Congress won every election under the leadership of SC Jamir. Since the beginning of the decade, the two most important issues in Nagaland's elections have

been "greater Nagalism" and "the backwardness of the Eastern region." Both of these issues have a strong emotional component.

Expansion of Regional / State Parties' Influence:

Even though the nature of the Indian party system seems to reflect how unstable Indian electoral politics are, and it has been interpreted as a shift towards a "new one-party dominance" that will make regional and state-based parties less important in Indian politics, it would be premature to draw any conclusions about the Indian party system. Certainly, the results of recent parliamentary elections show that regional parties' share of the vote has stayed strong, but their share of seats has gone down. In the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, regional parties got 51.3% of the vote, and in the next election in 2009, they got 52.6%. However, this trend could not be kept up, and in the 2014 Parliamentary elections, regional parties only got 48.6% of the vote, which was the same as their performance in the 1998 general elections. But seat share has gone in a very different direction. Regional parties held 47.9% of seats after the 2004 elections, but only 40% of seats after the 2014 elections, even though their vote share went up. This is because the country is very split up. Every time there is a general election, the number of state parties and national parties changes. For example, in 2019, 43 state parties and 7 national parties ran for the Lok Sabha.

In Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Rajasthan, the local political parties are not very well known. Gujarat had two small groups that broke off from the Janata Dal and the BJP, but neither of them could last long. This made it possible for the BJP and the Congress to compete against each other. Unlike in Gujarat, regional politics have some potential in Karnataka because the two groups of the JD get the votes of a quarter of the voters together.

In Kerala, there are many different political groups. The United Democratic Front and the Left Front are the two main ones. In both of these coalitions and coalitions,

smaller state-level political parties play important roles, but the Congress and Communist parties control the political scene as a whole.

Regional parties control nine states, based on how many seats they have in Parliament. This includes smaller states like Meghalaya, Sikkim, and Manipur, where half of the MPs are from regional or state parties. Besides these states, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Jammu and Kashmir, and Haryana also belong to the same group. The number of votes each party gets is another way to judge how important it is. In the general elections of 1999, regional and state-based parties won at least 30% of the vote in thirteen states. These are the smaller states listed above. Regional parties got 95 and 67 percent of the votes in Sikkim and Manipur, respectively. Regional and state-based parties also got around 30% or more of the vote in J&K, Punjab, Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, West Bengal, and UP. In Tamil Nadu, a number of local political parties worked together to get 75% of the votes. In Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, votes for regional political parties ranged from 44% to 42%. In the 1999 elections, regional and state-based political parties got between 33 and 35 percent of the votes in Punjab, West Bengal, Haryana, and Orissa. In other states, regional and state-based political parties got between 29 and 31 percent of the votes. In a contest with many different sides, the regional political parties have done very well.

In the 2004 general elections in the states, more than 30% of the votes went to parties from the region. Regional parties got more than half of the votes in Sikkim, Mizoram, and Tamil Nadu. In the 2009 elections for the Lok Sabha, the regional parties got more than 30% of the votes in 10 states. Regional parties got more than 50 percent of the votes in Tamil Nadu, Sikkim, and Tripura. In a number of states, regional parties were able to control state politics. This happened much earlier than the rise of regional politics and parties in the 1990s, when they took on their current form. Aside from the North-Eastern states, regional or state-based political parties

have grown in Punjab, J&K, Orissa, and Tamil Nadu. Since J&K got its independence, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference has been an important part of J&K politics. Up until 1966, the Akali Dal didn't play much of a role in Punjab politics. However, since 1966, the Akali's have been at the centre of Punjab politics. In the 1969 state assembly elections, the Akali's established themselves politically by winning 43 of the 104 seats. In the same way, the DMK became a political force in Tamil Nadu when they won 50 seats in the Assembly elections of 1962. It came to power in 1967 when it won 138 seats. In 1977, AIADMK took the place of DMK. Because of this, Tamil Nadu's politics have become more localised since 1962.

Orissa has a unique culture that comes from the way its different historical, economic, geographical, and social forces work together. In 1952, when the state's legislative assembly was elected, regional issues began to show up in the state's politics. In the beginning, the Ganatantra Parishad and, later, the Swatantra party were regional political parties that split the country along regional lines. From 1952 to 1974, most seats in the legislative assembly were won by regional parties like Jana Congress, Utkal Congress, Ganatantra Parishad, and Swatantra Party. In 1952, the Ganatantra Parishad won 31 seats in the Assembly. In 1957, it won 51 seats, but in 1961, it only won 36 seats. Later, in 1967, the Jan Congress won 26 seats. In 1971, the Utkal Congress won 33 seats, and in 1974, it added two more to get to 35 seats. Goa's state politics were also controlled by the United Goans Party and the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party. In 1967, the local political parties of Karnataka and the independent candidates won a total of 41 seats in the state elections. In Andhra Pradesh, the local political parties and the independent candidates won a total of 70 seats in the assembly elections. In the West Bengal state elections of 1962, 1967, and 1969, the RSP and the Forward Block won a total of 22 seats, 13 seats, and 33 seats, respectively. In the 1980s, the AGP in Assam and the TDP in Andhra

Pradesh grew stronger. After doing this analysis, it's clear that regional parties have been in charge of state and regional politics in many states since before 1990, which is when these parties started to play a bigger role in national politics. In conclusion, before 1990, a number of states were run by regional or state-based political parties[36].

Positions Ideological of the Regional / State Parties:

When we look at the ideologies of these parties, we find that they are neither on the Left nor on the Right. Most of these parties came into being because they were against Congress. They pushed for things like self-respect, state autonomy, and economic balance, and they filled the space left by the Congress's decline. Regionalist arguments are used in a wide range of ways by regional parties. Most of the time, they bring up issues related to regional pride and identity, which can include demands about culture, history, and language.

Another part of regional ideology is the call for more freedom for the state, which points to the role of the governor and Article 356 of the Indian constitution. These needs sometimes come together with questions about falling behind, investments, and industrial progress. So, identity, statehood, autonomy, and development are the arguments that regional parties use most often[37]. The Akali Dal in Punjab, the DMK in Tamil Nadu, and the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir all use identity and autonomy arguments. The All India Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and the Biju Janata Dal in Orissa both put a lot of emphasis on development and regional identity as their main arguments. Chandra Babu Naidu took over the Telugu Desam Party of Andhra Pradesh, which was started by N. T. Rama Rao over the issue of identity. During his time in charge, Chandra Babu Naidu changed the arguments even more so that they were in favour of development. Regional parties like the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, the Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha, and the Vishal Haryana Parishad grew out of the idea of separate states.

When figuring out what these parties stand for, it's important to remember that two or three parties can represent the interests of the same class. As CP Bhambhri talked about the political parties' ideologies, he said that as the political landscape changes, political parties try to get support from different parts of society. They do this by trying to be a "broad-based" party that brings together people with different interests. Because of this, their ideas become less clear. 38 This can be seen with most of the regional parties when they make practical and strategic changes and join forces with parties with different ideas (a recent example of this could be seen in the alliance of NCP and Shiv Sena in Maharashtra in 2019 and the alliance between the PDP and BJP in Jammu and Kashmir in 2015).

The way the main political parties are defined by their ideologies shows how many different ideologies work together and against each other. If we look at these parties based on their ideas, it's clear that they have different ideas that sometimes go against each other. Regionalist parties that focus on identity issues can also be forward-looking and open to change, like the DMK in Tamil Nadu and parts of the Akali Dal in Punjab.

Most of the regional parties are based on one leader who doesn't have a clear ideology. Even though most of these parties started out with issues about regional identity, cultural pride, or regional inequality, they often include non-regionalist issues and arguments in their platforms. The fact that parliamentary and state assembly elections don't happen at the same time and are fought over different issues makes it necessary for regional parties to change their positions often[40].

Social Foundations of Regional/State Parties:

Because of the rise of regional parties, politics has become triangular. As regional political parties changed, so did the traditional way that voters chose between them. New groups of voters showed up at the polls. In most states, the regional parties were able to get more people to vote than the national parties. The Congress lost voters in

states like Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal because of this. The social base of the regional and state-based parties grew when the Congress lost its supporters, but this only looks at one part of the regional parties' social base. The fact that the non-Congress and non-BJP votes were split up, like when the Janata Dal broke up into many different groups in Bihar, Karnataka, and UP, was also a big reason why these parties got so much support.

If we talk about the social bases of the regional parties in the Northern states, it becomes clear that these parties rely heavily on the support of a specific caste or group of castes. Starting with the Akali Dal, which is a well-known regional party in Punjab, it is based on the rural peasantry. But more than half of its votes come from the Sikh community. This party is supported by the Other Backward Classes of the state. The Janata Dal is where the Samajwadi Party got its start, so it is thought of as a party of Yadavs and Muslims. The Rastriya Janata Dal (RJD) is best known as the party of the Yadav community in Bihar. Like the SP, the RJD has its roots in the Janata Party.

As we've already talked about, the regional parties in the southern Indian states grew out of a sense of regional pride and identity. In Tamil Nadu, the two main Dravidian parties, the DMK and the AIADMK, seem to be in charge of two different social coalitions. AIADMK depends on support from OBCs and SCs, while DMK depends on support from upper castes and OBCs. In Andhra Pradesh, the Telugu Desam Party started out with support from poor, rural voters, especially women. It was also backed by SCs and OBCs. NTR brought together middle farmers and middle-class people from backward castes to form a social coalition. However, by 1998, some people from backward castes and poor people had switched their support to the BJP. In most states, anti-Congressism led to the rise of regional parties, which in turn shaped their political views and social bases. It also limited the ways they could work together to win the election. Since these parties were formed by people who

didn't like the Congress, they joined forces with the BJP and ignored the Congress. This partnership between the regional political parties and the BJP changed the way society worked. For example, Lok Shakti in 1998 broke the Vokkalinga and Lingayat axis, which made it easier for the BJP to get into Karnataka. It put the Vokkaligas in a separate group and brought the Lingayats into the BJP. In Bihar, the Samata Party did something similar when it joined with the BJP to create a new social bloc of people from lower castes. In Maharashtra, the NCP made progress in 1999 when the Marathas came together. This made it possible for the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance to get votes from the OBC community.

In the Indian states, regional and state parties have grown in different ways, as we've already talked about. Contrary to what some of the literature on the change of the party system in India says, there is no consistent trend toward the rise of regional parties in all of the states. In Southern states, the main things that brought people together to form regional parties were pride in the region, a sense of regional identity, and the desire for a separate state. There was a lot of caste mobilisation in the North Indian states (except Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir), which made it possible for these parties to form. In Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, ethnic lines gave rise to regional parties like Akali Dal, National Conference (NC), and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which want more autonomy within the country's federal system. After looking at the different theories about how regional parties came to be, it is clear that no single theory can explain how these parties came to be. The rise of these parties has been a complicated process that has been caused by many things.

CHAPTER 4

REGIONAL PARTIES IN NATIONAL POLITICS: THEIR ROLES IN THE FORMATION AND FALL OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT SINCE 1989

Regional parties have a considerably longer history in state politics than they do at the federal level. Congress only began to lose support in the southern states in 1967, giving rise to regional political parties based on state-based regional aspirations. However, it took nearly two decades for these parties to establish a significant national presence. The Janata Party government, which took office in 1977 following the emergency (June 1975-March 1977), provided an early glimpse of Congress's waning power and the growing influence of Regional Political Parties. The three stages of political evolution of the Congress party are depicted below. Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, it enjoyed a secure and protected dominance in Indian politics. It was always victorious both at the national level and in most of the states. It was able to remain in power despite a steady decline in its share of the vote (except after Indira Gandhi's death in 1984, when it received 48.1 percent of the vote)[1].

During the Nehru era, India's democratic governance was bolstered by Nehru's recognition of India's unique socioeconomic and regional variety and his belief that the country's political system should foster rather than stifle it[2]. Congress was able to maintain control over India in large part because of the diversity within the party, which prevented a tendency toward centralization and allowed for internal resolution of significant regional crises and their resolution[3].

After Jawaharlal Nehru's death, the political landscape altered, and Indira Gandhi became firmly entrenched. She modified the Congress party's strategy of coalition

and negotiated democracy when she came to office in 1966. Her father Jawaharlal Nehru was a very different person from his daughter, Indira Gandhi. Almost immediately after Indira Gandhi was elected Prime Minister in 1967, the Congress party launched a campaign for the next general election. "Worst since independence" was a widespread phrase used to describe the year 1966 because of the deteriorating of the economy, rising prices, and food shortages, as well as a massive public protest against the ruling party. When it came time to vote in the election, the campaigning was conducted in an atmosphere of dissatisfaction, confusion and pessimism. Although Congress was able to regain control of the federal government party following this election, they fared far worse in elections for state assemblies. [5] It lost over half of the Indian states[5] as out of the 16 states, it was able to reclaim power in only eight. Left-leaning coalitions were chosen in Kerala and Orissa, respectively. Madras, a Congress bastion and the birthplace of K Kamaraj, picked a regional party, the DMK, to take power in place of the Congress. As a result, Congress failed to secure a majority in any of these states[6], despite being the largest party in any of these states.

In this election, the Congress was challenged by seven major opposition parties: the Jana Sangh, Swatantra Party, Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP), DMK, CPI, CPI(M), and Praja Socialist Party (PSP). The Lok Sabha dropped the Congress to 283 seats. The Swatantra and Jana Sangh parties achieved significant advances in the number of seats they won in this election to the Lok Sabha. The Swatantra Party won 44 seats, while the Jana Sangh got 35 seats. The PSP and SSP, as well as the rising of the DMK, were important features of this election. The DMK was the only regional and state-based party that scored well in the Lok Sabha election, however other state-based parties performed well in the state assembly elections. The All-Party Hill Leaders Conference in Assam, the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, the

Maharashtra Peasants' and Workers' Party, and the Akali Dal (Sant Fateh Singh Group) in Punjab emerged as the largest opposition parties in their respective states even though none of these parties managed to win as many seats as the DMK in the elections. 7 Many of the regional parties, notably the Kerala Congress, DMK and Peasants and Workers Party (PWP), did not gain as many votes in parliamentary constituencies as they did in assembly constituencies in this election because the parliamentary and assembly elections were held at the same time. 8 With a 9.69 percent share of the vote, state-based parties gained 43 seats in this election.

Many believed that regional parties performed poorly in the 1971 presidential election. To begin with, some newly founded regional parties were unable to gain a foothold in the national political arena. Political parties including Shiv Sena, BKD, and the Bangla Congress were unable to register in the national parliament. As a second reason for this belief, the success of the Congress Party in the Lok Sabha and its rising hold in the states had diminished its capacity for bargaining for coalition administrations. 9 At the expense of other recognised political parties and independents, the Congress grew its influence. A total of 14 percent of the vote was cast in 1971, compared to 26.1 percent in 1967 for the four nationally recognised parties, the Jan Sangh, the Swatantra, and the SSP and PSP. In addition, the percentage of votes cast for independent candidates dropped from 13.8 percent to 8.6 percent.. This election saw a slight improvement for regional parties over the national elections of 1967, but regional status in parliament was eroded. The DMK received 35.3% of the vote in Tamil Nadu while the United Front of Nagaland received 60.5 percent in tiny Nagaland, both states where regional parties gained a plurality or majority of the votes. It was the Telangana Praja Samiti, which garnered 14.4% of the votes in Andhra Pradesh's Telangana area, that was the second-largest party in Andhra. All of Assam's hill districts voted in favour of the All-Party Hill

Leaders Conference, which received 10.9% of the state's votes. The Vishal Haryana Party garnered 9% of the vote in Haryana, according to the latest results. More than two-thirds of votes were cast for the new Utkal Congress in Orissa and 12.6 percent for BKD in Uttar Pradesh. 30.8 percent of the vote went to the Akali Dal in Punjab. In eight of the eighteen states, a regional party came in first or second place in the popular vote. Although the Jan Sangh was officially ranked second in Jammu and Kashmir, independent candidates backed by the local Plebiscite Front obtained a bigger percentage of the vote. Jan Sangh won 5.4 percent in Maharashtra, narrowly ahead of the Peasants and Workers Party with 5.2 percent. Regional parties garnered 13.2 percent of the vote nationally, a little increase from the 10.1 percent they received in the 1967 elections. In 1971, the "de-linking" of central and state elections sparked a shift in the focus of regional political parties from state assembly elections to national politics, resulting in a shift in public attention to national politics.

As well as the internal and external issues that India was experiencing at the time, Indira Gandhi's autocratic style and the country's chaotic state culminated in the first constitutional crisis, dubbed 'Emergency,' in the aftermath. On the basis of national interest, Indira Gandhi argued for this drastic measure, particularly on the following grounds: In the first place, there was a danger to the safety and democracy of India itself. Economic growth and a better life for the underprivileged were also critical. Third, she asserted that countries outside of India may intervene to weaken and destabilise India's position in the region.

An announcement was made by Indira Gandhi on All India Radio that the lower house of parliament will be disbanded and that new elections would be held in March. Two significant developments occurred in Indian politics as a result of this announcement. One of the first events to occur was the foundation of the Janata Party (JP), which included four opposition parties: the Socialist Party of India, the Hindu

nationalist Jana Sangh, the Bhartiya Lok Dal and the Congress Party (O), which had split from Indira Gandhi's party in 1969. Voters in India's Lok Sabha election were greatly influenced by this coalition. The resignation of Jagjivan Ram, a well-known politician, long-time member of Congress, and head of the Harijan community, was another remarkable development. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was slammed by Jagjivan Ram when he announced his retirement, for declaring a national emergency and for damaging Congress' internal democracy[13].

The Congress party was shocked by the outcome of this election. Only 153 seats were won, a loss of almost 200 seats. Only seven seats were gained by the CPI's allies (Four from Kerala and three from Tamil Nadu). While the Janata Party's constituent elements had gathered around 50 seats in 1971, their allies CFD (Congress for Democracy) secured 28 seats[14].[15] Following the election, a Janata administration led by Morarji Desai was created. Different factions failed to unite in this government, which was a combination of groups. By the middle of 1979, it had become apparent that the Janata Party lacked a coherent set of policies and principles. Congress (O), Jan Sangh, BLD, Swatantra Party (formerly the Socialist Party of PSP and SSP) sections, as well as the newly established CFD were part of the party. The economic agenda of Congress (O) included a push for a free market economy, as well as a warning to the government sector. It also adhered to the nonviolent principles of Gandhi. Without disrupting the existing land ownership structure, the BLD aimed to promote village and farmer growth. It also supported corporate ownership by individuals rather than government and a free market economy. The Swatantra Party advocated for private ownership of production assets. One of its main goals was to oppose public-sector employment and to promote private enterprise. They favoured land redistribution to small farmers and believed in strengthening the public sector by taking on the country's private monopolies.

They also supported economic policies that would help build a socialist society, as required by the country's constitution. However, the Jan Sangh stood in opposition to both of these parties because they had no economic policy but instead sought to transform India into a Hindu Rashtra [15]. In a short period of time, people observed the hostility and antagonism between the various factions of the Janata party and the lowest levels of politics. In July 1979, Y.B. Chavan moved a vote of confidence in the lower house, and Raj Narain, who had previously left the Janata Party, had his revenge. On July 9, a total of 13 Janata Party members resigned in response. Biju Patnaik, H. N. Bahuguna, and George Fernandes were among the prominent cabinet ministers that resigned as a result of this. Consequently, the Janata party lost its majority support in Parliament, and on July 15, Mr. Morarji Desai resigned as the head of the government[16].

On January 3rd through 6th of that year, new general elections were held following the unsteadiness of the first non-Congress government and the failure of the first coalition government. As a result of the party's internal strife and political ambitions, the Janata Party was split into several groups. People had had enough of the government's instability, so they turned out in large numbers to vote for the Congress Party, which returned Indira Gandhi to office. 374 seats were won by Congress and its allies. In comparison to 1977, Congress obtained 353 seats (42.7 percent of the vote) compared to 189 seats (41 percent of the vote). Despite only a 1.7% rise in its vote share, the Congress party was able to secure 353 seats because to the fragmentation of the opposition. Only 34 seats were won by the Janata Party and its allies. In 1977, the Janata Party and its allies got 295 seats (41.3 percent of the vote) among the Janata Party and its allies, however this year, the Janata Party and its allies earned 31 seats (19 percent of the vote). 53 seats were won by left-leaning parties[17].

It was a populist appeal to elect a government that works on a more basic level of stability and incompetence in this election[18]. State and regional parties did not fare well in this election. There were 1541 candidates from six national political parties, and 485 of them were elected to the House of Representatives. The Congress party snatched away the gains of the regional parties. There were just 35 seats for regional parties in the 7th Lok Sabha after the DMK won 16 seats, while Akali and the smaller Left parties in West Bengal were reduced to only one seat each. As of this writing, only one candidate from an unrecognised political party had managed to gain one of the total 156 seats[19] available.

Once again, the Congress won, and Indira Gandhi was able to silence anyone who questioned her. Social, political, and economic events of this era left a lasting influence on the country. 'The Great Depression' Indira Gandhi was able to implement numerous social and economic reforms thanks to the Congress's political control. To put it another way, the sixth five-year plan (1980-1985) was the first step toward the end of Nehruvian socialism. This time period also saw the Khalistan Movement and Operation Blue Star (June 1984), both of which culminated in the terrible killing of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. For many Sikhs, the goal of Khalistan was to establish an independent state in Punjab. Movements that began peacefully in the 1970s and turned violent in the late 1970s and early 1980s had their roots in the 1960s and early 1970s. On June 1, 1984, the Indian Army and paramilitary forces launched Operation Blue Star against the armed militants who had taken refuge in the Golden Temple. But even if this mission was a success, the local Sikh community was outraged by the use of force within the sacred shrine. It was on October 31, 1984, that two of Indira Gandhi's bodyguards, Beant Singh and Satwant Singh, killed her. A void was left in Indian politics after Indira Gandhi's death, as there was no one in the country at the time who could have matched her

stature and influence. As a result, the Congress Party chose Rajiv Gandhi to be its leader. Due to terrorist unrest in Assam and Punjab, a fresh election was held in 1984 throughout the country.

During the Lok Sabha elections of 1984, seven national political parties and seventeen state and regional political parties competed[21]. 404 of the 514 seats in the House of Representatives were up for grabs, giving Congress a commanding majority. For the first time since Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi won the previous general elections, the Congress was victorious. In the wake of Indira Gandhi's assassination, Congress was able to achieve a massive victory. Except for Congress, no other party has reached the 400-member threshold in Lok Sabha since 1984. In addition to Rajiv Gandhi's rise to power, the Bhartiya Janata Party was formed, and Telugu Desam was established as a regional political party with the potential to have a national effect. When it came to opposition representation in the Lok Sabha, the Telugu Desam Party of Andhra Pradesh emerged as the clear frontrunner, winning 30 seats[22].

Regional parties gained seats in the House of Representatives in this election. The rise of the TDP in Andhra Pradesh and the AGP in Assam were two of the most significant elements in regional political parties' extraordinary performance. The AIADMK-Congress alliance in Tamil Nadu resulted in a large number of seats for the Congress in the state's legislative elections. Both the Congress and the AIADMK received 25 seats each. 23 Nevertheless, the regional nature of political parties became irrelevant at the national level due to the Congress's 415 Lok Sabha seats.

Lok Sabha Elections of 1989: A Significant Shift in Party Structure:

In November 1989, the Lok Sabha's ninth election was held. For this election, anti-corruption was a major issue alongside ethnic secessionism and communal problems

like the proposed 64th constitutional amendment bill. 24 In the Bofors affair, Indian intermediaries, including the Prime Minister and his close allies, were accused of receiving inducements in the billion-dollar transaction with Swedish business Bofors for 155mm field cannons. Another reason for Singh's resignation was due to this. Janata Morcha was created after the resignation of VP Singh. During the Rajiv Gandhi era, Singh created the Janata Dal on October 11, 1988, by uniting the Janata Party, Jan Morcha, Congress (S), and Lok Dal. He won the Janata Dal's presidential election. Many regional political parties, including Telugu Desam, DMK, Congress (Socialist), and Asom Gana Parishad, formed alliances with this party. 25 The CPI(M) and the Bhartiya Janata Party lent their support to the coalition, which was dubbed the "National Front." V.P. Singh led the National Front government once it was constituted.

Although they were members of the same front, the regional political groups fought independently. This election was not significant for these parties' performance. Members of the National Front included the TDP, the DMK, and Asom Gana Parishad, amongst others. Only two seats were won by the TDP, while the DMK was unable to register an account. Despite the presence of the Assam Gana Parishad as a constituent party of the National Front, no Lok Sabha elections were held in the state of Assam in 2009. It was evident from the outcome of this election that Indians had a wide range of political views. A single political party could not consistently perform well in all parts of the country. In contrast, the Congress performed well in the South, winning 39 of the 43 seats in Andhra Pradesh and leaving just two seats for the TDP and the CPM. The 9th Lok Sabha elected 27 members of the regional parties. As important as regional parties' seat and vote percentages may have been, this election was noteworthy because it allowed sub-national concerns to be heard for the first time in national politics. Political parties in the region appealed directly

to caste and community groups. People who voted for these parties did so because they were able to voice their concerns in this way. A total of 27.1% of the vote was cast for all of the state parties combined. Aspirations of state-level parties to participate in Indian national politics are beginning to rise at this time[26].

Because it relied on the backing of two improbable allies—the Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and Communists—the National Front government of 1989 was doomed to be a short-lived one. Only 11 months were spent in power. With regards to the controversial issue of Ayodhya Ram temple, there were major differences between the two parties, and the two parties could not be reconciled under the VP Singh government. The government was pushing for an initiative to reserve a quota for "other backward castes," and the BJP was opposed. It was finally on November 7, 1990 that the Indian People's Party (BJP) announced that it was leaving the cabinet of Vice President Singh. In the wake of this decision, the VP Singh government lost a vote of confidence in Parliament. 27 Aspiring Prime Minister Chandrashekhar had defected with 58 MPs and created the party Samajwadi Janata Party (SJP). 196 members of Congress (I) and 11 of its regional partners supported him in forming a new alliance government. Chandrasekhar took the oath of office as prime minister on November 16, 1990, after a vote of confidence in Parliament. Chandra Shekhar's relationship with Congress (I) was tense from the start, and the government lasted only four months. When the new government presented an interim budget rather than a normal comprehensive budget because of the pressure of the Congress, the disparities came to the surface (I). Chandrashekhar resigned on March 6, 1991, after a series of uncontrollable crises between Congress and the UF led to new elections in the country

This election was held two years after the ninth Lok Sabha polls. A Non-Congress government had failed to last for the second time because of internal strife and

factionalism at the national level, which led to unrest and uncertainty at the national level. This was a central concern for the Congress Party. There had been sectarian and socioeconomic strife throughout the 16 months of non-Congress leadership, which undermined national unity and effective management, Congress maintained. 28 The National Front and its communist allies focused on social justice while the BJP focused on Hindu nationalism[29]. Because of the Mandal Commission's findings and the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy, this poll was sometimes dubbed the 'Mandal-Mandir' elections[30].]. On May 21, 1991, Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated while campaigning in Madras, delaying the rest of the election until mid-June.

The new electoral system was put in place as a result of the 1991 Lok Sabha elections. As a result of this logic, one would expect a similar wave to the one that occurred in 1980, with a large victory for Congress in 1991, yet this did not occur. Though after Rajiv Gandhi's death, a great wave of sympathy washed over the Congress, improving its standing slightly but not enough to become the government. 31 With 226 seats, the BJP came in second with 119 seats and around a two-thirds increase in votes compared to the previous election. Nearly half of the seats obtained by the national front allies in 1989 were lost in the recent election[32]. While there were no clear regional trends in favour of either party, the results from the various states did demonstrate some variation in the way people voted. As contrast to the previous election, the TDP performed well and won 13 seats. TDP's result would have been considerably better if not for the tragic death of Rajiv Gandhi, which caused a sympathy wave that threw the party's political course off course. Congress's success was largely due to the compassion factor. As a result of the killing, elections were held for the majority of the House and Senate seats[33].AIADMK in Tamil Nadu was another regional party that made an appearance. All 39 Lok Sabha seats

were won by the AIADMK-Congress (I) coalition, with the AIADMK securing 11 of them. In spite of the killing of Rajiv Gandhi, the AIADMK-Congress (I) alliance's huge success in this election was largely based on the two state parties DMK and AIADMK competing against one other on regional issues[34]. Only three states, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Orissa, were represented by the Janata Dal in this election.

This election had a 5% reduction in its overall vote percentage[35]. As well as the strong showing of regional parties in Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka but especially Gujarat, BJP victories were notable in this election. It became clear that the state and the regional parties were here to stay, and that we had entered a new political era[36].

Sonia Gandhi, the widow of Rajiv Gandhi, was offered the position of party leader following the election results, but she turned it down. Rao was picked to lead the administration since there was no one from the Nehru-Gandhi family who could take the reins.[37]. A minority government at the centre led by PV Narsimha Rao was the first to finish its term. Due to his minority leadership, however, some important economic and political decisions were taken during his term.

United Front	Seats	BJP +	Seats	INC +	Seats	Others	Seats
Janata Dal	46	BJP	161	Congress	140	BSP	11
CPI(M)	32	Shiv Sena	15			AIFB	03
CPI	12	Samata Party	08			IUML	03
TMC	20	HVP	03			MGP	01
DMK	17	SAD(B)	08			UGDP	01
TDP	16					Ind. & Others	17
SP	17						
AGP	05						
RSP	05						
M PVC	02						
Total	172		195		140		36

Source: **Election Commission of India.**

Table 4.1 Election Results for the Year 1996 by Political Parties and Alliances

Controversy ensued during the 1996 Eleventh General Election. There was a tie in parliament, as expected by many political analysts. There were three major political parties in India: the Congress, the BJP, and the National Front/Left Front (NF/LF). All three were able to win the majority of the votes on their own. A total of 161 seats were gained by the BJP, with the Congress (I) taking second place with 141 seats, and the National Front-Left Front combo snatching up a total of 120 seats (table 4.1). Until now, this was the only election in which all of the parties either lost or gained[39]. With this election, a new phase toward a multi-party system centred on "regions" was begun, in which the big all-India parties sought power at the center[40].

President Shankar Dayal Sharma requested the BJP to form a government because of their legislative plurality. As a result, on May 16th, a minority administration led by BJP veteran leader A.B. Vajpayee was sworn in as Prime Minister. Only 13 days in, this government crumbled because Prime Minister Vajpayee resigned rather than stand trial in Parliament for his lack of confidence, knowing full well he would lose[41].

President Shankar Sharma invited H.D. Deve Gowda to succeed Atal Bihari Vajpayee. In order to build a new administration, he led a coalition of regional and communist parties. The NF-LF alliance (now termed the United Front or UF) chose former Karnataka Chief Minister H. D. Deve Gowda as Prime Minister after much deliberation, which included consideration of West Bengal communist veteran Jyoti Basu for the position. After Rao, Gowda was the second southerner to serve as prime minister. In spite of their refusal to join the administration, the Congress party provided support to the coalition. Deve Gowda's ministry was in power for only ten

months before it was forced to step down by the Congress after losing a vote of confidence in Parliament. Only 158 members of Gowda's 13-party coalition were elected to the Lok Sabha. I.K Gujral was chosen as the leader of a new United Front-led coalition government by the Congress party in order to avoid mid-term elections. The fact that he had a noncontroversial public image and no significant political base elsewhere in the country made him acceptable to the majority of UF constituents and members of Congress[43]. On April 21, 1997, Gujral took the oath of office as Prime Minister. Again, Congress withdrew its support for the administration on November 23, 1997, and it collapsed. IK Gujral resigned and sent his resignation letter to the President of India, although he did not support the dissolution of the lower house of parliament. Even though President Shankar Sharma accepted his resignation, he requested that Prime Minister IK Gujral remain in office until a replacement could be found.

BJP +	Seats	Congress	Seats	UF and Others	Seats
BJP	182	Congress	141	CPI	09
Samata party	12	RJD	17	CPI(M)	32
SAD (B)	08	RPI (M)	04	SP	20
TC	07	IUML	02	DMK	06
Lok Shakti	03	RJP(Gujarat)	01	JD	06
AIADMK	18	KC	01	RSP	05
HVP	01	Others	04	FB	02
Shiv Sena	06			TMC	03
BJD	08				
PMK	04				
Independents	04				
Total	255		170		83

Source: **Election Commission of India.**

Table 4.2 Seats won by political parties and coalitions in the 1998 midterms

India's political landscape was on display in the twelfth Lok Sabha elections (table 4.2). For the fourth time in a row, there was no obvious winner in the parliamentary election, which resulted in a hung parliament. More than half of all votes were cast in favour of the BJP (25.59 percent) and the Indian National Congress (25.82 percent). Despite its lowest voter turnout, the INC retained its seat share and even gained one seat over the 1996 Lok Sabha election, despite the drop in the party's vote share. Sonia Gandhi's leadership played a role in this to some extent[44].

Parties	1996	1998
BJP and its allies		
Seats	195	278
National Vote (%)	25	40.7
INC and its allies		
Seats	143	171
National Vote (%)	29.77	30.03
United Front		
Seats	120	45
National Vote (%)	19.20	16.81
Non-Aligned Parties		
Seats	85	55
National Vote (%)	26.03	10.23
Source: Analysis of Sudha Pai in Lok Sabha Election 1998		

Table 4.3 The Bipolar Regional Trend: Regional Parties Towards Strong Allies

Many regional parties, such as Samata, Lok Shakti and AIADMK as well as TDP and Trinamool Congress, worked with the BJP to fine-tune their positions before of the elections. As a result of their cooperation, the regional parties produced their individual manifestos, despite the agreement. As a result of this, the regional allies

maintained their own organisations and issued their own manifestos during the conflict. Dravidian parties such as the AIADMK and Lok Shakti made it clear before forming pre-poll alliances with the BJP that they would not adhere to the BJP's definition of Hindutva; they would retain their own identities, ideology, and philosophy. However, both during and after elections[45], the BJP has tempered its own ideology in order to meet the needs of its allies.

Two new trends occurred in the Indian party system as a result of this election's regionalization. There were two "poles" in the regionalized multiparty system, the INC and the BJP, even though no party won a majority. As a result, regional parties began to create pre and post-poll coalitions around these poles, which had an even bigger impact on the national party system's structure and form (table 4.3).

With only a slim majority in 1998, NDA's government was ineffective from the start because it relied solely on regional allies. In the end, it received a vote of confidence from 274 to 261. A coalition government could not be formed because of the indecisiveness of its regional allies. With 18 seats in the coalition, AIADMK leader Jayalalitha Jayram demanded the suspension of the DMK administration in Tamil Nadu and a reversal of the corruption allegations against her. It was impossible to meet her demands, and so AIADMK withdrew its support from the coalition.

In spite of AIADMK's exit, the government may have lasted for another 13 months had another regional ally, the BSP, not withdrawn its support at the last minute.

The election for the thirteenth Lok Sabha in 1999 was a rehash of the election for the twelfth Lok Sabha in 1998. As a result of this year's election, there has been an increase in the number of parties in parliament and the government. To create the government, the BJP partnered with 17 other political parties in a pre-election

alliance known as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). In the Popular House, Atal Bihari Vajpayee was a leader of a significant party/coalition.

As part of a multi-party system, the 1999 midterm elections demonstrated the continuity of "federal-coalition governance." Pokhran-II, Bus Diplomacy to Lahore, and the Kargil War were all factors in the context of this meeting. New structural developments occurred in the Indian party system when a coalition of more than twenty parties decided to join forces and compete in the elections under the NDA platform, which was based on the formula of seat-sharing arrangements to minimise conflict and had a Common Minimum Program (CMP). They also resolved to promote A. B. Vajpayee as a Prime Ministerial candidate throughout this election's campaigning.

2004 saw the 14th Lok Sabha elections following five years of steady rule. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, India's prime minister, declared the elections six months before the scheduled polling date. With the slogan "Shining India," the BJP hoped that favourable weather conditions, rising economic growth rates, and progress toward peace with Pakistan would persuade voters to support the NDA in the next elections. 48 In addition to the BJP and its allies, the Congress formed state level alliances with various regional parties. Sonia Gandhi serves as the organization's leader. As part of a historic first for Indian politics, the 2004 Lok Sabha elections featured a struggle between the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and United Progressive Alliance (UPA), despite the fact that the UPA wasn't officially formed until after the results were in. For the first time, the Congress Party forged a complete pre-election alliance in many crucial states to take on the BJP-led NDA coalition. [49] Just like in 1998 and 1999 general elections[49], these alliances played an important role in leading the Congress alliance to victory. A total of 145 seats were won by the Congress and its allies this time around, an increase of 31 seats from the worst-ever performance

in the 1999 elections. After years of resisting coalitions (the Pachmarhi Declaration of 1998), the Congress Party became an important coalition builder during the 2004 election, making it a substantial change from 1999. As a result of the relative strength distribution between the Congress and BJP, the Congress was generally considered to be a weaker partner in coalitions than the BJP in states like the East and South where the BJP was a third party and at best a minor player, while states like Gujarat and Maharashtra in northern India, where the BJP and regional or leftist parties contested elections head-to-head, the Congress was considered less "coalition-able."

Whereas East and South Asian regional parties like those represented by the TDP, AIADMK/DMK, BJD/AGP, and the Karnataka JD(U)/Lok Shakti could find an ally in this Lok Sabha election in the form of the BJP against their main rival, the Congress could not join forces with these regional parties or the Left-wing parties because they were their main rivals in the states in which they operated (except for states where the Congress itself was reduced to a third or worse position such as in Tamil Nadu). In states where the Congress party has been reduced to a third or fourth party status (e.g., Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and possibly UP), it could be an attractive alliance partner to first and second parties, or 'coalition-able' if it faced a direct challenge from the BJP/NDA and there was a third or fourth minor party.

The fifteenth round of India's general elections took place in 2009. All of this was under the control of the Congress and its friends. NAREGA and other social and welfare measures, including Bharat Nirman, were emphasised by the Congress in its manifesto and during its campaigning for the election, while the BJP focused on "national security" as its main issue and attempted to make the general elections a referendum between the personalities of L K Advani, the BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate. 50 Contrary to expectations, a clear mandate in favour of the Congress-led UPA was given despite the Lok Sabha's fragmentation, and the UPA was able to

secure 261 seats, the highest number for the Congress since 1991. However, in this election, the BJP had really lost the election due to their counterproductive (pro-Rich) methods and slogans like "Shining India." Since 2004, the NDA has been reduced to just a few parties, including the JD(U), Shiv Sena, the SAD, and other minor parties as its allies. This has helped the Congress. As a result, the BJP was left feeling somewhat alone. After supporting 23 political parties in 2004, only seven remained when the 2009 general elections were held[51].

Political Parties	1991	1996	1998	1999	2004	2009
Indian National Congress	36.26	28.80	25.82	28.30	26.53	28.52
Bharatiya Janata Party	20.11	20.29	25.59	23.75	22.16	18.84
Total of INC and BJP	56.37	49.09	51.41	52.05	48.59	47.36
Regional Parties	43.63	50.71	48.59	47.95	51.41	52.54
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Christophe Jaffrelot and Gilles Verniers, "India's 2009 Elections: The Resilience of Regionalism and Ethnicity," *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal.* 3/2009 Contests in Context: Indian Elections 2009. Accessed on August 23, 2020, available on https://journals.openedition.org/samaj/1092

Table 4.4 Comparing the vote share of national and regional parties from 1991 to 2009 (in percentage of valid votes) *

The table 4.4 clearly demonstrates that the two major political parties, INC and BJP, were unable to achieve significant growth between 1991 and 2009, whereas the regional political parties have been successive. This indicates that there has been no'renationalization' of politics in the Indian union, but rather a continuous trend towards regionalization. Notably, the regional political parties received more

legitimate votes than the two big parties-INC and BJP combined in the 2009 general elections, thus reversing a trend that was seen in the 2004 general elections.

Elections to the Lok Sabha in 2014 and the Declining Role of Regional Political Parties:

Voters in India's 2014 Lok Sabha elections observed a huge departure in the two decades-long trend of electoral results. Despite the fact that the BJP emerged victorious in this election and went on to win a majority government, the NDA remained together. As a result, most regional and state parties suffered a reversal of the gains they had made in the previous few election cycles. With 212 seats and a similar vote share (46.6 percent against 46.7 percent in 2009), regional political groups had equal representation in this election, but there was a large variation among them. In the end, only five regional political parties managed to garner more than 3% of the vote. Aside from Mamata Banerjee's TPCC in West Bengal, AIADMK headed by Jayaram in Tamil Nadu, and Biju Patnaik's BJD in Orissa, no other regional parties were able to make an impact in this election' (table 4.5).

Most post-election analysis focused on the party system as a "developing one-party dominant system," but a closer look at this election shows that the party system has not fundamentally changed; rather, it has entered a new phase. It was referred to as the 'Fifth phase of regionalisation[52]. For caste-based regional parties in northern India, this was a severe defeat. In the 2009 general elections, "the politics of social identification has achieved a threshold of saturation, therefore exposing the potential of other modes of mobilisation," as articulated by Yogendra Yadav and Suhas Palshikar. [53] The good performance of regional political parties in the East and South more than made up for the dismal performance of North Indian parties.

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

Source: **Election Commission of India. (For details see Appendix I and II)**

Table 4.5 Vote share and seats won in General Elections of 2009 and 2014 for regional and state parties

It was at the conclusion of the year that a collection of regional parties attempted to reclaim their footing. These fresh initiatives were spearheaded by regional party leaders such as KC Rao of the TRS from Telangana, Mamata Banerjee of Trinamool Congress from West Bengal, Chandrababu Naidu of the TDP and Akhilesh Yadav

of SP from Uttar Pradesh. 54 With this move, the regional opposition groups hoping to unseat the NDA in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections were brought together. Even though they advocated for a Federal Front that was independent of both the BJP and the Congress, these figures were unable to defeat the BJP in this year's Lok Sabha polls.

The BJP was re-elected to power in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections with a commanding majority. The BJP-led NDA won 349 of the 542 contested seats in the Lok Sabha, an increase of 16 seats over the previous election. Before this election, various coalition scenarios were unclear and uncertain. It was expected to be a two-horse race between the BJP-led NDA and the Mahagathbandhan, a coalition of opposition parties. Triangular conflicts between NDA, Congress-led UPA and other regional parties in most states transformed the political landscape. 55 The BJP gained 303 seats, bringing the NDA's total to 351 seats, while the UPA won only 90 seats (see table 4.6). 56 A minor improvement over its 2014 record, which saw it win 44 seats, propelled the Congress party to its current position as the second-largest political party in the Lok Sabha. Two major players emerged with wins of at least 22 seats each: YSR's Congress and Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress.

Alliance	Seats	Votes %	Contested Voteshare
NDA	351	38.4	38.5
UPA	90	26.4	27.2

Source: https://www.indiavotes.com/alliance/partyWise/17

Table 4.6 2019 Lok Sabha Elections: Seats Won by the Alliance and Vote Shares Securing

As in the last election, the majority of the country's regional parties suffered defeat in this election. The Bhartiya Janata Party gave them the go-ahead to implement them. However, JDU's 16-seat victory this time compared to two seats in the previous election was the only regional party's performance that stood out. As an important BJP ally, Shiv Sena held on to the 18 Lok Sabha seats it had won in the last Maharashtra elections. The AIADMK, the dominant party in Tamil Nadu and an ally of the BJP, suffered a major setback in the general election, losing 36 seats in the lower house of parliament. After winning 37 seats in 2014, it only managed to win one this time around. The LJP's seat share in the BJP coalition remained stable at six. With the BJP partnership, the SAD could only win two seats, compared to the four seats it had previously won[57].

With the help of regional political parties, the Congress has formed alliances in some large states. The DMK in Tamil Nadu, the NCP in Maharashtra, and the RJD in Bihar and Jharkhand were among the Congress' most important allies. Karnataka's Janata Dal (Secular) and the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference were also included in the list (NC). It was the only UPA ally that emerged as the third largest political party in the lower house, obtaining 23 seats in the Lok Sabha. It was unable to secure a single member in Congress in 2014. In Maharashtra, the NCP won five seats and lost one. The RJD in Bihar lost all four seats it won in the 2014 elections.

Major regional parties remained independent of both the NDA and the UPA. Some smaller parties included the TMC in West Bengal, the TDP in Andhra Pradesh, the BJD in Orissa, SP and BSP in Uttar Pradesh, and the TRS in Telangana. Only the YSR Congress and the TMC were able to hold on to their seats, taking home 22

apiece. Andhra Pradesh's YSR Congress party had its best ever election results, expanding its Lok Sabha representation from 8 to 22 seats. TMC suffered a 12 seat loss, bringing their total down to 22. Only three seats were gained by the TDP. The BJP and N Chandrababu Naidu's TDP partnered in 2014, giving the BJP-led NDA a combined strength of 17. It's worth noting that the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) had its representation in the Lok Sabha decrease from 20 in 2014 to 12 in 2019. SP and BSP, two other major regional parties, joined forces to halt the BJP's triumph march. Until the BJP took office in 2017, Uttar Pradesh had been alternately ruled by these two parties for the previous two decades. This is a much stronger alliance than the one SP and BSP had against the BJP in the 2014 general elections. This coalition was a failure, as only 15 seats were won by these parties. A total of 10 seats were won by BSP while just 5 seats were lost by SP[58].

CHAPTER 5

CHANGING REGIONAL AND STATE PARTY DYNAMICS FOLLOWING THE 2014 LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

Since India got its independence, there have been many changes to the way its parties work. From a "one-party-dominant" system to an unstable coalition period, a higher degree of political party fragmentation, and then the "bipolarization" of regional political parties, which paved the way for successful coalition governments at the centre, the system went through many changes. Regional and state-based parties not only have a lot to do with these changes, but they are also a big reason why they are happening. Even though regional parties at the state level have been around since the beginning, they have been overshadowed by the Congress's power. During the 1990s, regional parties started to play a bigger role in national politics, and some of them even became known as "king-makers."

Changes are an important part of the political system, and the Indian party system reflects these changes in its nature and role. Regional parties have also shown that their roles in the Indian party system vary more than they used to. These parties started out on the sidelines, but now they are at the centre of their states. When the coalition era started in national politics, it gave regional and state-based parties a chance to take the lead in national politics, too. This change started a new era in the relationship between the centre and the states and in the process of the country becoming more federal.

Since the last two general elections, the Indian party system, especially at the centre, has gone through some big changes. The 2014 Lok Sabha election is seen as a turning point for these changes. Scholars have called it a "second dominant party system," among other things. In this election, the NDA, which was led by the BJP, won a huge majority and wiped out all of its political rivals. In the next general

elections, the same thing happened again: one party got the most votes. The role of regional parties in Indian politics was also changed by these changes, which led to many changes in Indian politics. This chapter is about how these state-based and regional parties are playing less of a role in national politics and what that means for Indian politics, especially after the 2014 general elections.

Elections to the Lok Sabha in 2014 and the Formation of the Third Front:

Since the country has had three successful coalition governments at the centre since 1999, it was thought that the next one would also be a coalition. This time, too, these parties started to take stands for the national elections that are going on right now. As the political battle started, these parties also started to talk about how they wanted to take the lead in national politics. After months of talks and rumours, a Third Front was officially put forward as an alternative to the two national parties, BJP and Congress. At a high-level meeting between 11 political parties on February 5, 2014, they made the official announcement. These regional and state-based parties decided to work together for the upcoming general election. On February 10, the leaders of these five political parties, such as Nitish Kumar of the JD(U), Prakash Karat of the CPI(M), AB Bardhan of the CPI, and Debabrata Biswas of the Forward Bloc, met at the home of former "Third Front" Prime Minister and JD(S) leader HD Deve Gowda in New Delhi. 1 After that, an official statement was made about the "Third Front," which was made up of 11 political parties, some of which were on the left and some of which had a stronghold in a certain area.

The leaders of these Third Front parties bragged that they would get the most seats and form the next government[2]. Their claim was based on how the elections had gone and how strong these parties were in the Lok Sabha. At that time, parties other

than the Congress and the BJP were in charge in nine states, and together they had more than 221 MPs in the Lower House[3].

Regional Parties Kept Their Options Open in the 2014 Lok Sabha Elections:

Even though a "democratic, secular, federal, and pro-people" agenda was launched as a "common front," some of the regional parties kept their options open for a post-election alliance, which could be with either the Congress or the BJP. 4 From the North Indian regional parties, RJD, SP, BSP, and JDU were the most important ones. In the northern state of Bihar, which saw the mobilisation of the dominant caste, the RJD joined forces with the Congress, while the JD(U) joined the Third Front. The Lok Jan Shakti Party, which was led by Ram Vilas Paswan, and the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party, a smaller party with support from the OBC Kushwaha community, both joined the BJP. In Uttar Pradesh, the SP, which has taken turns running the state for the past 20 years, did not join forces with any of the parties that made up the Third Front. In Punjab, BJP's longtime partner SAD went with BJP again.

Party Name	2009		2014	
	Vote Share (in %)	Seats Won	Vote Share (in %)	Seats Won
Trinamool Congress	31.21	19	38.41	34
CPI (M)	32.11	9	22.71	2
BJD	37.24	14	44.77	20
AIADMK	22.91	9	44.45	37
DMK	25.12	18	23.64	0
TDP	25.02	6	29.36	16
TRS	6.16	2	14.03	11
YSR Congress	0.00	0	28.94	9
SP	17.30	23	22.35	5
BSP	27.42	23	19.63	0
SHS	17.01	11	22.82	18
NCP	19.28	8	15.04	4
JD(U)	17.79	20	16.04	2
RJD	20.13	4	20.14	4
LJP	6.55	0	6.40	6
SAD	33.85	4	26.27	4

Source: **Election Commission of India. (For details see Appendix I and II)**

Table 5.1 Regional / State Parties with their vote share and seats won in the 2009 and 2014 General Elections

In the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, the TDP allied with the BJP, marking its return to the National Democratic Alliance after a 10-year absence. Since 1998, when it backed the NDA and helped AB Vajpayee to become prime minister, the TDP has been allied with the BJP. In terms of the number of seats, the TDP was the second-largest coalition partner in the NDA government in 1999, but it left the NDA following its defeat in the 2004 general election. 5 Other two significant regional

parties, BJD and AIADMK, left their options open and did not join Congress or BJP, despite initially agreeing to Third Front's agenda. But within a month, the ruling AIADMK severed ties with the left [6].

Even though at the start of this election people thought there would be another coalition government, the 2014 elections broke a pattern that had been going on for 20 years. After this election, the BJP became the largest political party and formed the government on its own. However, the NDA alliance stayed the same. People see this election as a change in the way parties work in India. It has been called a "landslide" and "historic." Most of the analysis done after the elections talked about the party system as a "emerging one-party dominant system" and a "decimation of opposition" in which both the Congress Party and the other parties lost. An in-depth look at this election shows that the party system is always changing. Table 5.1 shows which regional political parties won seats and how many votes they got in the 2014 General Elections. It also shows how their seats and votes changed from the last time they ran for office.

After the election, the new party crushed the hopes of regional political parties to form a new government alliance. Most of the regional parties lost their hopes of playing a major role in Indian politics at the national level. Regional and state political parties got the same number of seats, 212, and the same number of votes, 46.6 percent, as they did in 2009. However, there were big differences between them in this election. There were only five regional parties that got more than 3% of the vote. Other than the three regional parties led by Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal, Jayalalitha in Tamil Nadu, and Biju Patnaik in Orissa, none of the other parties were able to make much of an impact in this election. The biggest surprise was for the state parties in north India that are based on caste, especially SP, BSP, and RJD.

Destruction of the Third Front:

The Third Front failed dismally and was unable to enter national politics. Similar to previous accounts of a Third Front, this one also struggled with fundamental problems such as divergent priorities and a lack of vision regarding security, foreign policy, and the economy. Since 1989, the leadership issue has always been the most contentious aspect of any Third Front. These parties always united to oppose the ruling party and keep them out of power, but lacked a convincing plan to win over the people. The Third Front presented a so-called secular front to keep the BJP and the Congress out of power, but this goal was insufficient to attract the majority of the country's youthful voters. Moreover, electoral calculations at the state level prevented the Third Front from becoming a viable platform. Most of the time, the struggle between regional parties at the state level prevents the formation of a "single front." It occurred again with the Third Front. Due to Mulayam's attendance, Mayawati's BSP did not join this Front, and Lalu Prasad Yadav did not join since Nitish Kumar was present. Mamata Banerjee's TMC refused to join because of the Left, its major rival in the state, and the DMK declined to join the Front because of Jayalalitha[7].

Federal Front and Mahagathbandhan: Regaining Lost Ground:

After their disappointing showing in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the caste-based regional parties of Northern India tried to improve their performance by forming a grand alliance with other regional parties. In order to counter the BJP's momentum, the alliance of RJD, JD(U), and Congress was created in the Bihar Assembly election called the "Mahagathbandhan" In the Bihar Assembly elections, the "Mahagathbandhan" won a decisive victory. Similarly, a coalition of state-based parties was formed in Uttar Pradesh for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Previously,

the BSP and SP combination defeated the BJP in Gorakhpur and Phulpur by-elections. The primary objective of the Mahagathbandhan was to ensure vote transfer in conforming seats, so as to benefit everyone. Additionally, 8 RLD joined this alliance. While the SP and BSP contested 37 and 38 seats, respectively, the RLD contested three seats in the Western UP, which is considered its traditional bastion and where it has considerable support from the Jat population, the major caste in this region[9].

A group of regional parties, besides the "Mahagathbandhan," tried to make up for lost ground at the end of 2018. Chandrababu Naidu of the TDP from Andhra Pradesh, K. Chandrashekar Rao of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi from Telangana, Mamata Banerjee of the Trinamool Congress from West Bengal, and Akhilesh Yadav of the SP and Mayawati of the BSP from Uttar Pradesh were at the forefront of these efforts. This was an attempt to get the regional parties that will run against the NDA in the next Lok Sabha elections to work together. It was also an attempt to move them away from regional politics and toward national politics. In his public speeches, KCR also talked about the need to give states more power over things like agriculture, health care, and education that are on the concurrent list. 10 As part of his efforts to reach out to the opposition political parties, Rao met with a number of regional leaders, such as Mamata Banerjee, the chief minister of West Bengal, and Naveen Patnaik, the chief minister of Odisha. He also met with Akhilesh Yadav, the leader of the Samajwadi Party, and M. K. Stalin, the head of the DMK. Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, who is the leader of the YSRCP, was the only person who seemed to have given him clear support. MK Stalin, the leader of the DMK, didn't join the federal front because he wasn't sure how well it would work. Soon after this front was put together, people started to have different ideas. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee held a big rally in Kolkata, but K.C. Rao didn't go because a

Congress representative was there[12]. Rao's critics say that his attempts to form the federal front didn't go anywhere and were a waste of time.

2019 Lok Sabha Elections to Follow 2014 Pattern:

The BJP won a huge majority in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, which gave them power again. The BJP-led NDA won 349 of the 542 seats that were up for election. This is 16 more seats than it won in the last Lok Sabha election. Before this election, there were a lot of strange and uncertain things going on with coalitions. Early estimates said that the race would be between the BJP-led NDA and the Mahagathbandhan, which is a large group of opposition parties. But the political battle changed, and it became a fight between the NDA, the UPA led by the Congress, and other regional parties in most of the states[14].

Almost all of the results were the same as in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Even though they joined forces in groups like the "Mahagathbandhan" and the "Federal Front," regional and state-based parties did not do as well as expected. The BJP came out on top again as the only party with an absolute majority. "North, Hindi heartland, East, South, and West" are the five broad regions of India. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) got over ten percentage points fewer seats from the Hindi heartland in 2019 than it did in 2014, but it made up for those losses in the East. The other regions stayed the same.

15 Most of the UPA's gains came from the Southern states, while the Western and Eastern parts of the country almost forgot about it. BJP's fortunes changed most in these states: 8 seats in Karnataka, 16 seats in West Bengal, and 6 seats in Odisha. They lost 9 seats in UP and 5 seats in Bihar. For the NDA, the loss of the TDP in Andhra Pradesh was made up for by the gains of its ally, the Janata Dal (United). Even though, in the big picture, not much changed. For Congress, the loss of 8 seats

in Karnataka was made up for by 5 wins in Punjab, 8 wins in Tamil Nadu, and 7 wins in Kerala. The coalition partners of Congress won 29 seats in Tamil Nadu, which made a big difference in the UPA's total. This means that almost all of Congress's gains came from the South of India.

Party Name	2014		2019	
	Vote Share (in percentage)	Seats Won	Vote Share (in percentage)	Seats Won
Trinamool Congress*	38.41	34	4.11	22
CPI (M)*	22.71	2	1.77	3
BJD	44.77	20	43.32	12
AIADMK	44.45	37	18.72	1
DMK	23.64	0	33.18	23
TDP	29.36	16	40.19	3
TRS	14.03	11	41.71	9
YSR Congress	28.94	9	49.89	22
SP	22.35	5	18.11	5
BSP*	19.63	0	3.67	10
SHS	22.82	18	23.5	18
NCP*	15.04	4	1.4	5
JD(U)	16.04	2	22.26	16
RJD	15.46	4	12.11	0
LJP	6.50	6	8.02	6
SAD	26.37	4	27.76	2

these political parties are now recognized as the National Parties by the Election

Table 5.2 Regional / State Parties with their vote share and seats won in the 2014 and 2019 General Elections

Mahagathbandhan and the Federal Front's Failure:

The Mahagathbandhan in Uttar Pradesh could not live up to expectations. Even though the campaign was aggressive and very competitive, the results show that the alliance couldn't do much better than it did in 2014. It only got 15 seats, while the

BSP got 10 and the SP got 5, and the BJP got 62. Even though the BJP's share of seats went down from 71 to 62, its share of votes went up from 42.63 percent in 2014 to 49.6 percent in 2019. Together, the votes for SP and BSP went down from 42.2% in 2014 to 37.3% this time. 17 The SP lost 4 percentage points, which was more than the BSP, which stayed close to where it was in 2014[18].

The failure of "Mahagathbandhan" went against all the predictions that it would work to stop the BJP from winning. The alliance didn't work out as well as was hoped. It could be because these political parties only paid attention to voters who were most likely to vote for them. The Mahagathbandhan was not a proposal to all voters. Instead, it was a group of the most important parts of the three political parties. BSP is meant to be Jatav and SP Yadav's main party. While these parties focused on getting their traditional supporters to vote and making sure that votes would be transferred within their own communities, they forgot to get people from other communities to vote[19].

The leaders of the Federal Front pushed for a party that wasn't part of either the BJP or the Congress, but it couldn't beat the BJP in the upcoming Lok Sabha election. Chandrasekhar Rao, the chief minister of Telangana, and leader of the TRS, had hoped to bring together regional political parties to form a "non-Congress, non-BJP" front. However, when the NDA won the Lok Sabha elections on its own, his plans fell apart.

What types of regional parties performed well? (Not all the regional parties had same trajectory during the recent Elections):

The analysis of these two elections shows how the performance of regional parties is not always the same. The word "regional" is often used to describe a large number of different parties that are not very similar to each other. When the Congress lost

its power in national politics, there was a political void because there was no pan-Indian political party that could have filled it. In the states, there were state-based or regional political parties that took over the political space. At the national level, however, the coalition era started, which gave state-based and regional parties a chance to lead national politics. Almost 20 years went by during this time, and each election gave these parties more power in their negotiations. Since the last two general elections, the role of regional parties in national politics has changed in a big way. After a careful look at the last two elections and the way people voted, it's clear that these parties have different ways of doing things. This shows that not all regional or state-based parties have the same story of falling and losing in this changing situation. During the last general elections, some of the regional parties went away, while others were able to stay strong and even grow.

Regionally located parties are those that don't have to have a regionalist agenda. Some of these parties might even want to be the biggest political parties in the country as a whole. Still, these parties only matter in a certain part of the country. During the 2014 general elections, regionally-based political parties did not do as well as regionalist political parties.

Regionalist Parties Retained their Ground:

The central party system has changed a lot, especially when it comes to the role and power of regional political parties. After looking at the results of the last two general elections, it's clear that not all regional parties were hurt by the rise of a single dominant party. Since the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the successful regionalist parties have been the AITC, AIADMK, and BJD. In fact, none of these three parties had joined any of the big groups. The number of seats held by these parties went from 105 to 168, which is a big jump. Other regionalist parties that joined the NDA,

which was led by the BJP, also did well. For instance, the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and the TDP in Andhra Pradesh won a lot more seats than they did in 2009. In the same way, the SAD of Punjab could keep its share of seats. Since it started, the Trinamool Congress had its best performance ever when it won 34 of the 42 seats.

Compared to other regionalist parties, AGP did not do as well. AGP did not join forces with either the BJP or the Congress. Instead, it ran on its own for all 14 seats in the state. In the 2009 Lok Sabha election in Assam, the AGP worked with the BJP and won only one seat, while the BJP won four seats. But this coalition couldn't last long, and as soon as AGP left the NDA, both parties went their separate ways[36].

2019 Lok Sabha Elections:

In 2014, the BJP beat the Congress in 88 percent of head-to-head races. It also won 91 percent of straight races against regional and caste-based political parties, but only 28 percent against regionalist political parties (see fig. 5.1). In 2019, the BJP did the same thing it did in 2018 and beat both the Congress and the regional parties in straight contests. This time, it also did a lot better against the regionalist parties, winning 50 percent of the fights where the two were directly in competition. States like West Bengal, Telangana, and Odisha were able to make this happen.
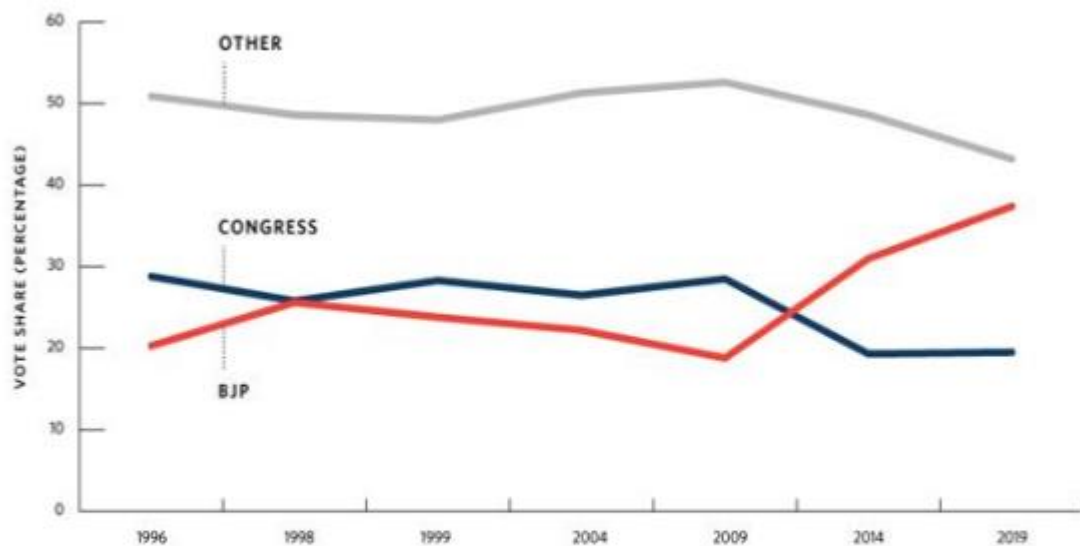
Figure 5.1 From 1996 to 2019, this chart shows how many votes BJP, INC, and other regional or state parties got in Lok Sabha elections

Figure 5.1 shows that the share of votes for parties other than BJP and Congress has been going down a lot since the 2014 elections. To figure out why this is happening, the scholar talked to some of the regional party leaders, who also confirmed the trend. As they talk more about the causes, they talk about how these parties didn't do enough to deal with the economy, job creation, foreign policy, and national rhetoric[38].

After the 2014 Lok Saba elections, these things have changed. The balance of power between national parties and regional political parties has changed in a big way. If we look at the election data, it's clear that between 1996 and 2014, Indian voters were evenly split between the two national parties, the INC and the BJP, and other regional parties (figure 5.1). Even so, the Congress and the BJP have held almost

half of the votes and have led three successful coalition governments. With the other 50% of votes, hundreds of regional and state-based parties have formed. With 52.6% of the vote, regional parties got the most votes in the 2009 general elections. In the 2014 general elections, it went down slightly to 48.6%, which is almost the same as in 1998 and 1999. After the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, this trend has changed in a big way. In the last two general elections, the Congress got about 20% of the votes. However, regional political parties have been losing support quickly, which has helped the BJP twice as much. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, 43.2 percent of the votes went to regional political parties [39].

Effect on the way the government works:

Scholars have talked and written a lot about the federal structure of India. Federalism is caused by a number of things that both affect and are affected by the way institutions work in a political system. To understand how federalism works in any country, you need to know about its party system. William Riker, who came up with the idea that the structure of the party system matches the structure of federalism, has said a lot about how important the party system is for understanding how federalism works. The federal separations of power can be weakened by a party system that is very centralised. If the parties are a little bit spread out, then federalism is also a little bit spread out[40].

The way India's federalism is set up in its constitution is closely linked to its party system. The changes in India's party system have also changed the way its federalism works. The phases of federalism show how it has changed over time, from the dominance of a single party to the fragmentation of the party system. During this coalition era, space was made for state-based parties and their long-sought goals. A new era of center-state relations also began during this time. During this time, state-

based issues became a big part of national politics, and they were sometimes the deciding factor in who ran the government and who didn't (the period between 1996 to 2014 could be the highest point of this phase). During the breakup of the party system, there were no formal or constitutional changes that could have led to the decentralisation of the Indian states. As we've already talked about, the "Bi-nodal" party system[41] in national politics, in which either the BJP or the Congress has been the pan-India party, did not push for a more decentralised constitutional system. In practise, however, there were signs of decentralisation, such as less use of the President's rule, more room for policy differences in welfare programmes, more involvement of some state chief ministers in paradiplomacy, and less influence of discretionary grants in the total pool of grants to the states[42].
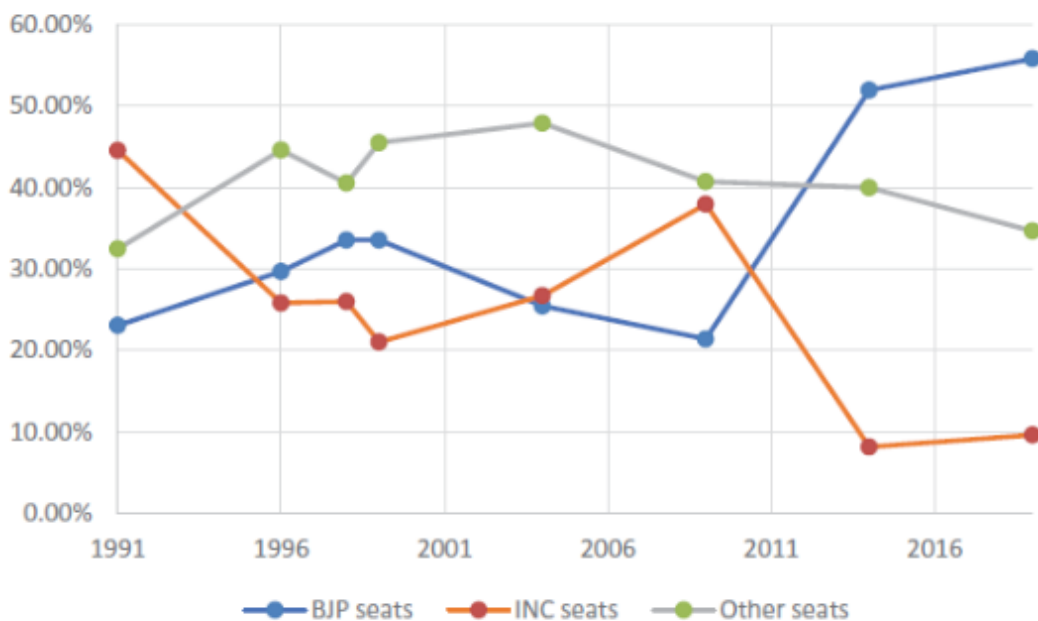
Source: Yamini Aiyar & Louise Tillin, "One nation," BJP, and the future of Indian federalism," *India Review* 19, no. 2, (2020): 117-135.

Figure 5.2 Seat distribution of the BJP, INC, and other parties

Now, the power basis of the associated parties is in the states, not the national party, therefore the centre can no longer dictate state governments. In addition, the federal government no longer considers the states to be subordinate, but rather as affiliated partners. After the decline of state-based parties, there were fears that the growing one-party dominance system would eliminate decentralising tendencies. These apprehensions subsequently came to pass as well.
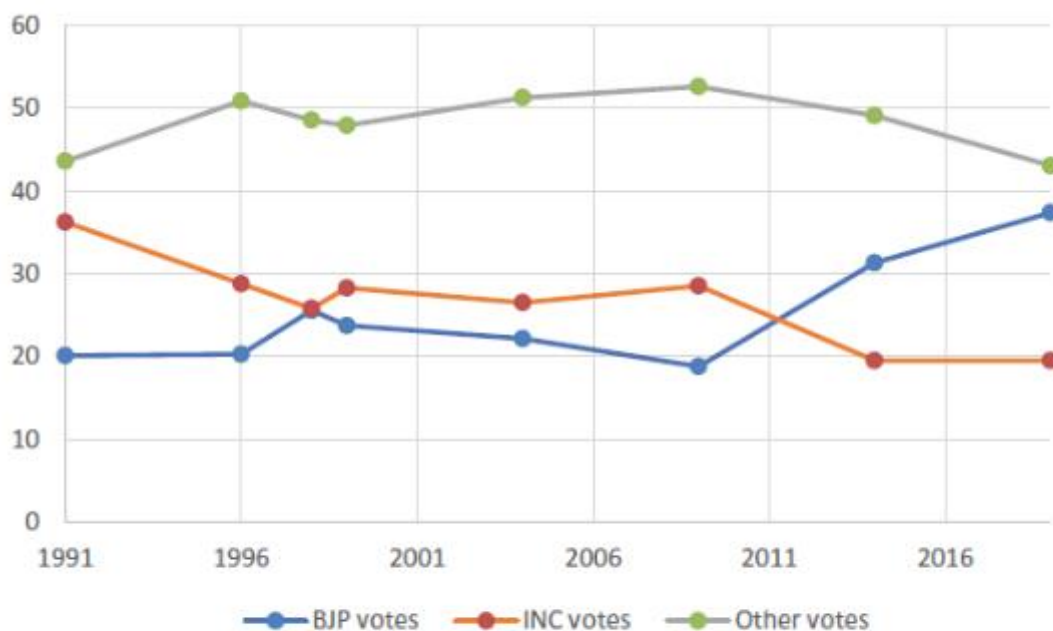
Source: Yamini Aiyar & Louise Tillin, "One nation," BJP, and the future of Indian federalism," *India Review* 19, no. 2, (2020): 117-135.

Figure 5.3 Vote share of the BJP, the INC, and other parties

As India's party structure has undergone considerable changes in recent years, the federal feature of the political system could not be immune to these developments. Regional and state-based parties, which have played a crucial role in creating centre-state relations and the federal structure of the nation, have been shocked by the emergence of a "one-party hegemonic system." The expansion of the BJP in national elections has been mostly at the expense of the Congress, but it has also strengthened

its standing against regional parties. As depicted in Figures 5.2 and 5.3, both the seat share and vote share of regional parties declined in the 2019 general elections compared to the 2014 elections. The first indications of the decline can be traced to the general elections in 2009. Consequently, it can be claimed that pan-Indian parties have begun to increase their standing in national politics compared to the 1990s and 2000s, a development that has been consolidated under the BJP's dominating one-party system[43].

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The study is a long paper about the way regional and state-based parties work in Indian politics. The party system is one of the most important parts of an elected "representative form of government." It connects the people who vote with the people who get elected. Modern political representative democracies are impossible to imagine without political parties and how they work. Parties make it possible for people to get involved in politics and give them a chance to have an impact on politics and political decisions.

It is hard to use a single theoretical framework to figure out where political parties came from and how they grew, because different political systems have different ways of doing things and have their own political developments. Several academics have tried to figure out where political parties came from, and most of them think it has to do with how democracy works in the West. Maurice Duverger divides the beginnings of political parties into two groups: their roots in elections and their roots in the legislature. This kind of party formation is based on a simple mechanism, and the parties grow slowly and steadily out of the activities of legislators and the parties' origins outside of parliament. Externally created parties are those that start outside of the legislature and always challenge the group in power and ask to be represented. Duverger says that there are many associations and groups that later turned into political parties or led to the formation of political parties. These include Trade Unions, Agricultural Co-operatives and Peasants' Associations, Philosophical Societies, Ex-Associations, Servicemen's Industrial and Commercial Groups, and intellectual and religious organisations.

Duverger gave a detailed explanation of where political parties came from and how they grew, but his theory only works in Western democracies. It doesn't tell us much about how political parties have grown in Asia or other

developing countries. J. La Palombara and Myron Weiner came up with three theories about how parties got started: institutional theories, historical-situation theories, and developmental theories. These theories explain how the party system has changed in developing countries, but India's party system has taken a different path.

India got its freedom after a long fight, and political institutions were left over from when it was ruled by the British. The preamble to the Indian constitution makes it clear that the Indian people give the Indian union its authority and power. The constitution is the basis for an India that is democratic, parliamentary, federal, and secular. Reps for the people get their power from the people who live in the country. The Indian constitution sets up a parliamentary system with elected representatives at the centre and in the states that works the same way.

At first, India was ruled by a single party, which scholars call the Congress system. In its early years, the Congress party did a good job of leading the national freedom movement. During the first four parliamentary elections, from 1952 to 1967, it changed into the country's leading party. Rajni Kothari called it the "Congress System," and Morris Jones called it the "one party dominant system." But the parties were free to compete with each other, and there was no opposition group that could stop the Congress from winning. The 1967 parliamentary elections were a big step toward a more competitive government and a more varied structure of party competition, but most of the changes happened at the state level and didn't make it to the national level. The Congress stayed the most powerful political party in the country until 1977, when the first coalition government was put together. Still, the Janata party government only lasted for a short time, and in 1980 general elections, Congress regained power. Only in 1989 did the regional parties start to grow at the national level. This is something that has been talked about in detail in the third chapter of this thesis.

After the parliamentary elections of 1996, a large number of parties started to show up on the Indian political scene. This was the beginning of the era of "coalition politics" or "alliance formation." India's democratic journey began in different ways with the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th Lok Sabha elections. India's party system continues to change with each Parliamentary election. After the 16th Lok Sabha election, it moved into a new phase, and the next general election showed that it was still changing.

In the second chapter of the thesis, it was looked at how the Indian party system has changed since independence. Starting with a theoretical explanation of how political parties got started, this chapter walked through the different stages of the Indian party system. After a thorough analysis of the different stages, it went on to describe what makes the Indian party system unique. It went into more detail about why the Indian party system does not fit into Western frameworks or types. In this chapter, the first goal of the thesis has been successfully met.

In terms of political changes in the Indian union over the past few years, the growing presence and importance of regional parties stands out. After the second chapter, there is a third chapter called "Emergence of Regional Political Parties in Indian Politics." This chapter talks about how regional and state parties grew and changed in the Indian political system. Since the middle of the 1990s, regional or state political parties and the regionalization of politics as a whole have become much more important in India, and this is when scholars started to pay attention to them. But since at least 1967, regional parties have been a part of the ongoing process of change in India's party system. After the national and state elections in 1967, there was a big change in how the party system worked. The Congress party did very badly in the national elections of 1967, both in terms of seats and votes. In the elections for the eight state legislatures that same year, Congress lost in seven states, which was a huge setback. But most of the winning parties in the 1967

state elections were small groups that had broken off from the Congress and didn't have a long history, a strong ideology, or a large base of support. When non-Congress governments were formed in eight states in 1967, it was a turning point in India's political history. This led to the decline of Congress in the states and the rise of regional parties in some of those states. But the Congress stayed in charge of national politics, except for a short time when the Janata Party was in charge from 1977 to 1979. However, the Congress quickly regained control of the centre in 1980. It wasn't until 1989 that regional parties made it known that they were involved in national politics.

There are two main theories about how regionalization affects party politics. One focuses on the socio-structural aspects of politics, while the other focuses on the organisational and institutional aspects. The socio-structural approach focuses mostly on two types of issues that have an effect on the process of a new party forming: changes in the party system and the stability of the party. It's about how a society's ethnic fault lines are one of the main reasons why the party system changes. This view of party politics was first put forward by Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan in 1967. The second approach, which is often found in works on the socio-structural pillars of regional differences in subnational party systems, looks at how the economies of different regions are different.

The second theory looks at how smaller regional/state-based and regionalist parties spread and how the subnational party systems became different from each other and from the party system for the whole country. It builds its models of how politics work around the organisational and institutional parts of politics. In the context of these theories, this chapter looks at how regional political parties came to be and how they have grown over time. This chapter shows that, contrary to some of the literature and works on the change of party system in India, there is no uniform pattern of regionalization across the States. Instead, each region has its own path of regionalization.

The Indian party system has changed a lot at the national level and in the states. Some things sped up the process of these changes, and the growth of regional parties is one of the most important ones. These groups brought up problems that had been ignored for a long time. The 1989 election was a big change in the way parties work, and it was the beginning of a time when coalition governments ran the country. In the 1990s, three "Ms"—the Mandal Commission's recommendations for OBC reservations, the dispute over the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid, and a new economic policy—were key drivers of change. They led to a new mix of politics that cut across the existing cleavage structure and a new way of mobilising people. These changes made parties more divided by caste and community, which was a big change in the way parties worked. The main things that have changed during the phase of coalition government at the central level are the bargaining power of the regional parties and the way the centre and states relate to each other.

In depth, the fourth chapter looks at how the balance of power in national politics tends to change over time. It looks at how regional parties are becoming more important in national politics, how the weakening of Congress's power led to instability and chaos in national politics, and how national and regional parties came together to form a stable coalition government.

In the last two elections, there has been a bigger change in the role of regional and state-based parties. Regional and state-based parties have lost power over the national government as one party has become more powerful. The in-depth analysis shows, however, that not all of the regional parties were hurt in the same way. Some of the regional parties have been able to keep their positions, but their influence at the centre has definitely decreased as a whole. It started with the general elections in 2014 and got more important after the Lok Sabha elections in 2019.

In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, there wasn't much change in how much power the regional parties had in the national government as a whole. However, their position changed because a one-party system was becoming more powerful. These parties began to lose their ability to negotiate, and this was especially clear in the case of North Indian caste-based parties. But the parties in the southern part of the country have stood their ground. This was also true for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The shifting positions of regional parties have affected the relationship between the centre and the states and the way the country is set up. The fifth chapter of this study talks about how the parties in the region will change after 2014.

This study proves that regional parties can't beat national parties' chances at the national level. There are many things that keep these parties from going beyond a certain area or state. Some things that make it hard for regional parties to win national elections can be talked about here:

- During general elections, regional parties don't have a shared agenda, and they don't come up with a list of priorities that they could use to win over voters. Any group of regional parties that work together has only one goal: to fight against the government in power. It's not a good option to run against any pan-Indian party in a national election.

- All of the Third Fronts made up of regional parties have had trouble with who should be in charge. All of the leaders of aligned parties want to be Prime Minister, but there isn't a single leader with enough support across India to get everyone to vote for them.

- Competition between states also hurts the chances of a united front at the national level. Regional and State Parties that are fierce rivals in their own states don't join the common platform because they want to keep their supporters in their own states.

Another finding of this research proves the second hypothesis of this study, which says that regional parties will continue to be important in Indian

politics. This finding goes against the overstated claims that regional parties are on the way out. Instead, it shows a new way in which regional political parties play a role in national elections. Even though some people say that a one-party system is starting to take over, this study shows that the coalition will remain a permanent part of national politics. There is no doubt that the position of the regional parties as a whole has changed, and they are no longer in charge of the national government(s). Still, the federal structure of the system and the diversity of the electorate will mean that pan-Indian parties will have to work with their regional partners.

The third hypothesis of the study said that ideological conflicts and problems with leadership are important limiting factors that make it hard for regional parties to play a big role in national politics. As we've already talked about, some of the regional parties are fierce rivals in their own states, like AIADMK and DMK in Tamil Nadu, the TDP and YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh, and SP and BSP in Uttar Pradesh. These parties don't join the common platform because they want to keep their support base in their own states.

The fourth hypothesis of the study looks at how the regional parties' social bases have changed since the last two general elections. As looked at in the previous chapters, there is a lot of evidence that confirms the trend that it will be hard for the regional parties to keep the ground they are losing. The biggest problem is for the local parties in the Northern states, whose poor performance is a sign of how much caste politics is used in these places. This trend was clear in the 2009 general elections, when the SP and RJD parties, which were from backward castes, lost. This caught the attention of scholars. With each general election, it became clear that these parties were getting worse. Now, it's clear and has been proven that caste calculations alone can't guarantee success.

After a thorough study of the Indian party system, especially the changing roles of the regional parties, and some interviews with the leaders of the regional political parties, a few suggestions can be made:

- During the general elections, when the regional parties come together to form a common front, there should be a good way for them to come to an agreement. For these coalitions to be stable, they must agree on the "Common Minimum Programme." For a longer-term political project, it's important to put ideology aside.

- When it comes to national elections, regional parties don't show voters the right picture. If you want to beat the national parties, you can't just oppose the government in power. These parties should talk about important things like the economy, making jobs, and the overall growth of the country.

- Regional parties should come up with new ways to reach out to a wider range of people. To deal with the fact that their core support base is changing, these parties need to come up with a new plan to reach out to social groups other than their core support base.

Some of the results of this study go against what you might think, while others are mostly in line with what we already know from other studies. Since independence, India's party landscape has been changing all the time, and its party system will continue to be an important and interesting case study for those who are interested and care about it. This will allow them to test theories about party systems and how they change and stay the same.