

## Golden Research Thoughts

### Abstract:-

As a liberal democratic system and with a parliamentary form of government, Indian political system has been living with several political parties, national as well as regional, which are actively engaged in the struggle for power. It was in the second half of the 19th century that several politically active groups began emerging in India. This process got substantiated in 1885 when the Indian National Congress was formed. In 1906, Muslim League, in 1916, the Hindu Mahasabha and in 1924, the Communist Party were formed. After independence, the adoption of a full-fledged democratic constitutional system set the stage for the emergence of several political parties.



### Keywords:

Political Parties, Problems, Democratic System, Parliamentary, Political System, Politically Active Groups.

## THE PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIA

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### INTRODUCTION

In 1951-52 as many as 14 national and 50 state level political parties, participated in first general Election. However, four political parties, Congress, PSP, Communist party and Jana Sangha could gain recognition as national level parties. Since then the number of political parties, both national and regional, has been increasing. The nature of the party system has been changing continuously because of both the splits in the existing parties and the emergence of the new parties. BJP Congress, BSP, CPM, CPI, PSP, FB, KC, AGP, SAD, TDP, DMK, AIDMK, SP JanataDal (S), Janata Dal (U), JMM, ML, National Conference, TMC, Shiva Sena, Trinmool Congree, PMKI and SP, and several others have been all active political actors in Indian Politics. The Indian Party System has all along been a multi-party system, though it remained virtually dominated between 1947-77 by a single Party (Congress). Now it has developed into a multi-party system and coalition politics has emerged as the new reality of Indian Politics in the 21st century.

The political parties in India face many problems. The major problems are organizational problems, the problems of indiscipline and the problem of finances.

### ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS

The inherent nature of social order in the country increases the problems of political parties. India presents a traditional, stratified social order. Religion, caste and many other cultural factors dominate the minds of the people and purely ideological politics is something difficult in the given context. To run purely secular organizations is much more difficult and hence the parties resort to informal tactics in increasing their appeal.

Factionalism, which is a pervasive feature of the Indian political system, poses another major hurdle in the way of effective organization of parties. The Congress party itself has witnessed for major split in five decades. There are three communist parties – the C.P.I., the C.P.I (M), (MK.L.) which arose out of factional politics in the Communist party of India. Regional parties like DMK, ADMK and Akali Dal have also witnessed splits. The parties are therefore riven with factions. The country saw in 1982, 3 Congress parties, 3 Communist parties, 2 Janata Parties, 2 Lok Dal, 2 Muslim Leagues and countless small state parties. Except the two Communist parties which are cadre-based and to an extent BJP, no other political party has had a strong organizational structure. Factionalism is thus a problem in all political parties and mere personal differences lead to splinter parties. This destroys the chances for any long-term perspectives in the organization of [political parties.

### DEFECTIONS

The weakness of central leadership in the case of almost all parties is symptomatic of the erosion of party discipline and party loyalty. This erosion is highlighted by a disturbing feature of our democracy viz., the phenomenon of defection. The Fourth General Elections in 1967 witnessed an alarming increase in the number of defections in the country. These defections were responsible for the fall of no less than 16 governments in the period between 1967 and 1968. Of the 3,500 and odd members of the Legislative Assemblies, more than 500 changed their political affiliations, which came to one out of each seven. Defections erode political stability in the country and disturbs the evolution of viable party system.

### ABSENCE OF INNER PARTY DEMOCRACY

Over the last Sixty years of Independence, no political party has been able to observe the basic norms of inner party democracy. The authority in organizational matters has always been from the top to the bottom through successive layers of party structures. Leaders of political parties in Independent India have not always emerged through a process of democratic elections and promotion from the lower levels to the higher and the top. Thus leadership in most political parties in India may be democratic in appearance but highly oligarchic in reality. Frequent rifts between the National and State party organizations in almost all national parties suggest that highly integrated party structures may soon no longer be appropriate and we may led to the realization that a national party should not be over- centralized, still less personalized. Fear of party disintegration has led many political leaders to worry about preventing it from being reduced to the status of a State or religion party. Strong leaders with support from their States have been passed in favour of loyalists. Instances are galore when the party presidents have appointed party chiefs in the states just before the organizational elections were to take place despite the protests of the central elections authority chairmen. Even when the elections to State party chiefs were to take place after a gap of almost two decades, the President of the party was “authorized” to nominate a majority of the state party chiefs. These trends are likely to boomerang on the party’s strength and capability. A modern party is a public institution, not a personal fief. Without intra-party elections, without ministers who enjoy strong regional support, and without the encouragement of a variety of opinions, political parties are like to wither away.

Undemocratic parties cannot contribute to constitutional and democratic government. It is suggested by some scholars that enforcement of party constitution through legal and judicial action may be necessary. Regular organizational elections should be mandatory. In order to control bossism in parties, many analysts have suggested the introduction of a more democratic process of nominating party candidates by a primary election by the party membership. An alternative suggestion is to authorize each local party unit to have a significant say in nominating the party candidates in that areas for legislative offices.

**REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN**

Political parties cannot remain indifferent towards women who constitute nearly 50% of the electorate. Although almost all parties have attempted to build women organizations to secure their support and make their organization more broad-based, but in practice they have fielded much less proportion of women candidates in the elections giving them proportionately much less representation in the legislative bodies than their actual population strength. In recent times this has been a matter of crucial concern in view of the controversy over reservation of 30% or so of the seats in these bodies.

**TRAINING OF MEMBERS**

Training and orientation of new members is one of the important functions of political parties. The parties which are organized on the model of cadre party systematically developed appropriate agencies of training for members. But most Indian parties, except for the Communist parties and the BJP have not followed this model. Parties in India do not have a permanent system of training of their members and whatever arrangements for training are done on adhoc basis by national or state level organization.

**NEED FOR NEEDS**

To perform various functions and contest elections in an effective manner, every political party requires huge funds. Apart from expenditure of office establishment, full time workers, agitations, propaganda and travel, parties have to organize election campaigns. But the financial matters of party are kept secret while other aspects of organization are known to people. Very little is known about finance of political parties. In fact, secrecy is maintained even within a party. Only a few leaders at the higher level know the truth about the total funds and expenditure. Parties do not publish statements of accounts, income and expenditure, though financial matters are discussed at conventions and conferences or in meetings of higher bodies like working committee or the executive committee. Many political parties and candidates have been found to be using dubious methods in raising funds, like kickbacks, funds from foreign countries and even from donations by mafia gangs and other non-desirable elements. How to let the parties get honest funding from legitimate sources for their basic and continuing political activities has emerged as one of the most crucial contemporary concerns of the reform agenda in respect of the functioning of political parties in India.

Most observers of political scene have stressed the need to ensure accounting and auditing of party finance at various levels of party organization. Transparent sources of party finance are a must.

**LACK OF IDEOLOGY AND VALUES IN POLITICS**

There has been a very sharp erosion of ideological orientation of political parties. Party dynamics in India has led to the emergence of valueless politics much against the ideals of the father of nation, Mahatma Gandhi, who suggested the Congress party should be disbanded after the achievement of Independence and its members should engage themselves in service of the people. While Gandhiji taught us tremendous selflessness, self-sacrifice and service to the people, such inspiration values, the democratic norms and institutions have been destroyed systematically over the last Sixty years of the working of the constitution. In the process, both the politicians and political parties have lost their credibility, the ultimate value that should bind them with the masses. There seems to be a crisis of character amongst the politicians, as the system does not encourage the honest leader. Because of the falling moral standards both in public and among the leaders, criminalization of politics and politicization of criminals has become the norms. Due to degeneration of leadership, parties have been entangled in power struggle for the sake of personal ends.

In amoral pursuit of power politics, every major players seems to be playing a no holds barred game. Astronomical sums of tainted money have come to play an important role both in the pre and post-election scenario. The entry of criminal elements within the folds of political parties and later their elevation to the portals of peoples representative chambers and the executive positions of ministers have resulted in an environment of declining moral standards of public life and emergence of value-less politics for personal gains. Unfortunately this trend has penetrated to all walks of public life and no political leader or political party seems to care for value-based politics and upholding of moral standards. The Gandhian value of the spirit of service to the nation has become completely extinct from the present day politics. So untrammelled by moral values has politics become that there are instance of the important and claim to high office of a politician being measured not in terms of what he can contribute to the state or public weal, but the size of the funds he can covertly raise and the necessary 'criminal' power to win elections he can provide.

**LEADERSHIP QUALITY**

The older political leadership had risen from the ranks. The rise was neither sudden nor irrational, and their adherence and commitment to party ideals and ideology was unflinching. They respected party discipline. The present day political leadership seems to be in a tremendous hurry to reach up to the top, and is not averse to use short cuts, dubious methods, money or muscle power to achieve their objective. The entry of the tough and persons with criminal background to the portals of the legislature is a very serious consequence of these trends.

Such incumbents thrive on the use of their lung power or aggressive instance to disrupt or withhold the proceedings of the legislature for days on thereby causing a tremendous drain on the public exchequer and the valuable time of the House. The result is that the more important issues facing the nation

do not get discussed or passed and policy making and the process of good governance suffer.

The last decade of the 20th century saw a sharp rise in political mobilization on the basis of social cleavages based on ascriptive identities, in particular of religion and caste. Casteism, Communalism and Personality Domination have been the main planks around which the fragmentation of political parties has taken place, which has resulted in more caste and class- based political violence in the society. Political parties have invariably exploited these sentiments for gaining electoral support and political mobilization of the voters.

These were another significant development after the 1989 elections affecting the party system. The coalition politics gained a new trend: parties' tended to lend support to Government from outside without formally joining it, thus ostensibly sharing power without assuming any responsibility. Article 75(3) only says that the Council of 'Ministers shall be' collectively responsible to the House of the people. The manner, in which this condition is met from coalition partners or from those outside it, is so of no constitutional significance. However, the experience of government formation with outside support both at the national and state level has invariably created instability in Indian politics. A corollary to these developments has been emergence of an environment of 'blackmail' within the party alliances, where not only a minority government or an alliance of parties felt insecure to implement its minimum election program or policies but also faced considerable hindrances in taking hard executive or routine administrative decisions in matters of appointments to council of ministers or representing a particular interest, constituency or any party's viewpoint in any policy move.

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