

# Political Parties --- Their Importance and weaknesses. With special reference to India

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## Abstract

Political Parties are the life line of democracy. They are indispensable for the working of a democratic Government. Political Parties though essential for democracy are extra constitutional body in political system. Political Parties have a number of drawbacks. The research paper describes about the importance, definition and weakness of the political parties.

## Key Words

Maladies, campaign, mitigate, defections, mandate, manifesto,

Association, communal, caste, lingualism, regionalism, Ideology,

Coalition, Amendment.

Political Parties are an integral part of modern political system. In all the independent countries political parties made their presence. Representative government could not work without them. Political parties are the life line of democracy. They are essential for the working of a democratic government. Political parties create awareness, deliver lectures, distribute literature, organize election rallies persuade the voters to cast their vote for their Party.

Lord Bryce said, "Political parties are inalienable. No free country has been without them. No one has shown how representative government could be worked without them. They bring order out of chaos of multitude of voters. If parties cause some evils they avert and mitigate others."<sup>1</sup>

In a Parliamentary form of government a political party which wins majority seats in the legislature forms the government. In case none of the political party gets majority seats in the election the coalition government is formed. The opposition parties keep a check on their arbitrariness.

According to MacIver, "There can be no unified statement of principles, no orderly evolution of policy, no regular resort to the constitutional devices of Parliamentary election nor of course any of the recognized institution by means of which a party seek to gain power."<sup>2</sup> Political parties therefore perform a necessary service, they are inevitable like the tide of the ocean.

A.L. Lowell said, "The true reason for their existence is bringing public opinion to a force and framing issues for public verdict."<sup>3</sup> Their aim is to make programmes and policies for the public and attract them to those programmes, so that they can speak with a unified voice instead of uttering unintelligible babel of sounds. Political parties make the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Bryce, Modern Democracies, Vol 1 p 125

<sup>2</sup> MacIver, R.M, The Modern States

<sup>3</sup> Lowell, A.L, Public Opinion and Popular Government, p 70

representative government workable and before election they help to bring together large number of men in acceptance of a common action.

The emergence of Political Parties is one century and half old in the real sense. With the growth of modern electorate and extension of the right to vote political parties became inevitable. Political parties developed their own organization for contesting and winning the election and forming the government. Political parties developed due to diverse religious, cultural, economic and regional interest.

Political party is an organized group of citizens who hold common views on public question and acting as a political unit to capture the political power to implement their programmes and policies.

According to MacIver, "Political parties is an association organized in support of some principles or policy which by constitutional means it endeavours to make the determinant government."<sup>4</sup>

According to Leacock, "By Political party we mean more or less organized group of citizens who act together as a political unit. They share or profess to share the same opinion on public question and by exercising their voting power towards a common end seek to obtain control of the government."<sup>5</sup>

According to Gettle, "Political party consists of a group of citizens more or less organized who act as a political unit and who by use of their voting power aim to control the government and carry out their general policies."

Glichrist said, "Political party may be defined as an organized group of citizens who prefer to share the same political views and who by acting as a political unit try to control the government."<sup>6</sup>

**In India we have a multi party system.** There are some National Parties, State parties and regional parties. The latest publication according to Election Commission of India there are 7 National Parties, 52 State Parties and 1785 unorganized parties.

**National Political Parties:** A political party is recognized as national political party if it fulfills the following conditions:<sup>7</sup>

1. If it secures six percent valid votes polled in any four states or more states in a general election to the Lok Sabha or to the legislative Assembly and in addition to it it wins four seats in the Lok Sabha from any State or States.
2. If it wins two percent seats in the Lok Sabha (11) at general election and these candidates are elected from three States.
3. If it is recognized as state Party in four states.

**State Political Parties ;** A political party is recognized as state political party if it fulfills the following conditions;

1. If it secures six percent valid voted in the state in the general election of the legislative assembly and in addition to it wins two seats in the assembly of the state concerned.
- 2 If it secures six percent valid votes polled in the state in general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned in and wins one seat in the Lok Sabha.
- 3 If it secures Eight Percent of the valid votes polled in the Lok Sabha or to the legislative assembly of the concerned state.

<sup>4</sup> MacIver, R.M., The Modern State, p 390.

<sup>5</sup> Leacock, "Elements of Political Science, p 311

<sup>6</sup> Gilchrist, R. N, "Principles of Political Science, p33

<sup>7</sup> Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) order, 1968 Amended by the Election Commission in 2005 and 2011.

New provisions have been added through Amendment act added in 2011 to become a State Political Party.

If it wins three percent seats in the legislative assembly at a general election of the concerned state or wins three seats in the assembly to the concerned state.

If it wins one seat in the Lok Sabha for every 25 seats or any fraction there of allotted to the state at the general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned.

In India at present we are having the following Seven National Political Parties. Bhartiya Janta Party, Indian National Congress, Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India(Marxist), Bhujan Samaj Party,Nationalist Congress Party, All India Trinamool Congress.

There are 52 recognized State Political Parties.

**Weaknesses or maladies of Political Parties.** Political parties though essential for the working of democracy have developed a number of evils which plays havoc to the unity of the state. The founding fathers of the American constitution were of the opinion that political parties are highly detrimental to national solidarity. They create strife, division, chicanery, and personal manipulation. The political parties use all methods good or bad, language moral or immoral, all styles, Techniques and manipulation to win the election.

**Political parties spread casteism, communalism, regionalism and lingualism.**

In India political parties provoke casteism in the society to attract the votes. In Indian society caste factor plays a important role to win the election. Bahujan Samaj Party claims to represent the Dalit votes. During election Dalit factor influence the voters which is not good for a harmonious society. Samajvadi Party claims to be a Yadav's party to attract the Yadav votes. Political parties while distributing the party ticket to contest the election keeps in mind in which constituency the particular caste has majority votes. While giving the ministerial berth caste representation is kept in mind. Politicians mobilize caste groupings and identities in order to organize their power. According to Rajni Kothari," It is not Politics that gets caste ridden,it is caste get politicized."<sup>8</sup>

**Political parties spread communalism** in the society to capture the votes. Some political parties are based on religion. Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, Akali Dal in Punjab, National Conference in J \$ K are such Political parties which provoke religious sentiments to secure the votes.

**Political parties spread regionalism** in the state to remain in power. Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, Telgu Desam Party in Andhara Pradesh, Trinamool Congress in West Bengal create regional feelings to win the election. The secessionist demand for separate independent state like Khalistan, independent Naga state are dangerous for national unity.

**Reorganization of the states on the bases of language is detrimental to national unity.** Division of Haryana and Punjab on linguistic bases,division of Andhra Pradesh and Telengana are the handiwork of political parties. These political parties use linguistic feeling of the people to capture political power. According to Mynor Weuner, "The organization of the states on the bases of language made the people conscious of the importance of their own language and they feel that study and promotion of their language or English likely to give better fruits than Hindi."<sup>9</sup>

**Political parties keeps their interest above the interest of the State.** It is a common tendency of political parties to care their vote bank instead of keeping the national interest above. They mitigate the political atmosphere against

<sup>8</sup> Rajni Kothari," Caste in Indian politics," New Delhi 1979,p 4

<sup>9</sup> Mynor Weiner, "The Politics of Scarcity"(Chicago,1962) PP 67-72.

each other. In May 2019 Lok Sabha general election in West Bengal Trinamool Congress Supremo Ms Mamta Banerjee and Bhartiya Janta Party did a vigorous campaign which led to the death of many workers of both parties.

**They encourage corruption:** During elections political parties distribute money to allure the voters. Candidates make many promises and numerous temptations to their supporters After winning the election they gave many benefits to them.

**Political parties create Factionalism:** All the political parties are faction ridden. Within the political parties groups are seen they fight with each other to keep their dominance.

**They crush the Individuality;** All political parties in India have their organization. The dictates of party high command is to be followed blindly. It crushes the individual initiative. In Indian National Congress Gandhi family, in Bahujan Samaj Party Ms Mayavati, in Bhartiya Janta Party Modi and Shah, in Samajvadi Party Akhilesh Yadav, Ms Mamta Banerjee in Trinamool Congress, Chander Babu Naidu in Telgu Desam, Kejriwal in Aam Adami Party are party supremo who are all in all in their political parties. Their decisions are final.

**Lack Of Intra-Party democracy:** The organization of all political parties in India is undemocratic. The office bearers of political are not democratically elected. They are nominated by the party Supremo.

**Problem of defections:** Political parties encourage defections to increase their numbers to form the government. Ministerial berth, monetary benefits are offered to encourage the defections. After the fourth general election of Lok Sabha in 1967 there was an alarming increase of defections in the country. A number of state government fall repeated due to defections. To contain the menace of defection 52<sup>nd</sup> Anti Defection Amendment act 1985 was passed and a new 10<sup>th</sup> schedule was added in the constitution.<sup>10</sup> But its effectiveness became futile when the legislators and Parliamentarians misused its provisions. Hence again 91<sup>st</sup> constitutional amendment act 2003 was introduced to strengthen the weak provisions of Anti Defection act 1985. But defections could not be contained. To a great extent the political parties are responsible for defection for their own interest to gain the control of government. All Political parties must be strict not to allow the defector legislators to join their party for ministerial berth or some monetary gains.

**Lack of ideology and values in political parties;** There has been a sharp decline of ideological orientation of political parties. Party dynamics has led to the emergence of valueless politics. Democratic values and norms are missing and political parties indulge in personal slander. Instead of propagating the party ideology and programmes they stick on chicanery, character assassination, abusiveness false promises to attract the voters during election. Decreasing moral standard of the leaders criminalisation of politics and politicisation of criminals has become the features of political parties. All Political parties in India have a number of criminals as legislators and parliamentarians against whom cases of murder, attempt to murder, extortion are pending in the courts.

**Personality cult in Political Parties:** There is importance of leaders in the parties in place of ideology. Political parties are due to some charismatic personality to catch the votes. They recruit the famous personalities from film industry and sports world to win the election. All political parties rallies around important persons Mayavati in Bahujan Samaj Party, Mamata Banerjee in Trinamool Congress, Akhilesh Yadav in Samajvadi Party, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in All India Congress Party, Amit Shah and Narendra Modi in Bhartiya Janta Party are more important than ideology.

<sup>10</sup> V.N. Shukla, "Constitution of India," Eastern Book company, Lucknow.

**Dictatorship of The Ruling Party:** If the political party in power gets thumping majority it leads to dictatorship. In Parliamentary form of government the party in power can get any law be passed due to huge majority in the Parliament. Mrs Indira Gandhi ruled like a dictator from 1971 to 1977. She imposed emergency in the country. She passed 42<sup>nd</sup> amendment act, 1976. It was a mini constitution which subverted the political institution and defaced and defiled the constitution. It was declared null and void by the Supreme Court of India.

**Multi Party system in India provoke the divisive and regional felling.** It is not healthy for solidarity of the country. Regional Parties based on caste, language, region, religion and culture are problem in national integration. National Conference in J&K and Akali Dal in Punjab, Mizo National front in Mizoram spread divisive feelings.

According to Dr Gilchrist, "Party system tend to make the political life of a country like machine. The opposition parties are always antagonistic to the party in power."

George Washington, the American President was against the political parties due to their draw backs. According to him, "It agitate the community with ill founded jealous, false alarms, kindles the animosity of one party against other, foments occasionally riots and insurrection."

**Suggestions:** Political parties are inevitable in democracy. Their growth is extra constitutional. They elicit the public opinion and make the democracy work. But political parties have developed a number of drawbacks. For gaining the control of the government they spread communalism, casteism, regionalism, violence, disruptive and divisive forces which may led to disintegration of the state particular in India. Such political parties which are dangerous for national unity and integrity must be banned. Partition of India in 1947 was due to the Muslim League a Political party which openly used the religion to gain political power and resulted into the Partition of India. Hence for the healthy democracy and for the integrity and unity of the nation such political parties should be banned. Political parties should present a manifestos, policies and programmes which should be based on to eradicate poverty, provide employment, save environmental degradation, free education, health facilities and to provide infra structure and ensure food, housing, law and order, security of women to gain the votes and to capture the power instead of exploiting the religious, regional, linguistic and caste feelings of the people for their benefit.

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