



"In the Shadows of Identity: India's History of Political Polarization and Majority Identity Politics"

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Abstract:

The objective of this paper is to examine the role of political polarization and majority identity politics in India. The rise of political polarization was facilitated by the hegemony of the majority community in the Indian polity, which justified the exclusion of minority communities from the political system and facilitated their mobilization into exclusive communities. Contemporary Indian polity is characterized by the political polarization of major communities and castes as well as the politics of majority identity. The BJP is a right-wing party that is strongly committed to Hindu nationalism. The Congress Party, on the other hand, is a secular party that is more aligned with the interests of the minority Muslim community. The two parties have been able to win support from different sections of society by appealing to their respective ideological commitments. As a result, Indian society is highly polarized along religious and caste lines. The paper examines the role of political polarization and majority identity politics in the Indian context and also examines the impact of this political polarization on Indian society. The paper argues that the rise of the BJP and the Congress Party has led to the rise of two competing nationalisms in India. The BJP's Hindu nationalist ideology is in conflict with the Congress Party's secular ideology. This conflict has led to the rise of majority identity politics in India. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of this rise for Indian democracy.

Keywords: Indian politics, polarization, Hindutva politics, identity politics, majority identity politics, Indian Democracy,

Introduction

Political polarization in India can be traced back to the country's colonial history. The British Raj divided the population into two distinct groups: the majority Hindus and the minority Muslims. This division was further exacerbated by the British policy of divide and rule, which encouraged religious and linguistic divisions in order to maintain control. Polarization can be defined as the process or act of dividing people into two groups based on their differing views, beliefs, or opinions. In political terms, polarization occurs when there is a significant difference between two groups in terms of their political beliefs or opinions. This can lead to tension and conflict between the two groups, as each side tries to promote its own views and beliefs.

The term political polarization can be traced back to the late 18th century when the French Revolution divided the country into two groups: the Jacobins, who supported the revolution, and the Royalists, who opposed it. In the 19th century, the term was used to describe the division between the supporters and opponents of Napoleon Bonaparte. In the 20th century, political polarization occurred between the left and right-wing parties in many

countries. In the United States, political polarization became a major issue in the late 20th century, as the country became divided between the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. Political polarization in India has a long history, dating back to the country's independence in 1947.

The Indian National Congress (INC) was the dominant political party during this time, and the opposition was largely fragmented. This changed in the late 1960s and early 1970s when the INC lost its majority in the Lok Sabha (the lower house of the Indian parliament) and a number of smaller parties rose to prominence. The most significant of these was the Janata Party, which won the 1977 general election. The Janata Party's victory was short-lived, however, and it was soon replaced by the INC. The 1980s saw the rise of two new political parties: the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM). The BJP emerged as the main challenger to the INC, and the two parties became increasingly polarized.

This trend continued in the 1990s, as the BJP rose to power and the CPM became the main opposition party. The 2013s saw the rise of a third political party, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which has been critical of both the BJP and the INC. The current phase of political polarization began in the early 2010s when the BJP won a landslide victory in the 2014 general election. The BJP's victory was followed by a series of state elections in which the party won a majority of seats. This has led to a situation where the BJP is now the dominant political party in India and the opposition is fragmented. In recent years, the term Identity Politics has been used more broadly to describe the tendency of people to view political issues through the lens of their own personal identity. This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the “personalization of politics.” Some political observers argue that identity politics can lead to a form of “tribalism” in which people are more likely to vote based on group membership than on actual policy preferences. Others argue that identity politics is a necessary and legitimate response to discrimination and exclusion.

What is Political Polarization?

Political polarization is the phenomenon where people with opposing views on political issues become increasingly more opposed to each other. This can be due to a variety of factors, such as the media only presenting one side of an issue, people only socializing with people who share their views, or people becoming more extreme in their views. Political polarization can lead to conflict and division among people, and make it difficult to find common ground on issues. In the United States, political polarization is a major problem, with people on opposite sides of the aisle often finding it difficult to even talk to each other. This has led to a rise in partisan media, where people only consume news that agrees with their worldview. Political polarization can have harmful effects on democracy, as it can make it difficult for people to come together and find solutions to problems.

Causes of Political Polarization:

There is no one answer to this question as there are a variety of factors that can contribute to political polarization. Some of the potential causes could include things like the media, social media, outside influences, and personal beliefs. In recent years, the media has been increasingly partisan, which could contribute to political polarization. People tend to seek out news sources that align with their own beliefs, which can create an echo chamber effect and make it difficult for people to see other points of view. Social media can also amplify this effect, as people are often only exposed to information and opinions that agree with their own. Outside influences, such as friends, family, and colleagues, can also play a role in political polarization. If someone is constantly surrounded by people with similar views, they may be less likely to consider other perspectives. Additionally, personal beliefs can also contribute to political polarization. If someone is strongly committed to a certain set of beliefs, they may be less likely to be open to other viewpoints. there are a variety of factors that can contribute to political polarization.

History of Political Polarization in India:

The partition of India in 1947 led to the largest forced migration of people in the world. In the aftermath of the partition, people were displaced within the country and the polarisation of communities was the result of the conflict. The violence during the partition led to the death of millions of people and the displacement of millions more. The partition of India also led to the creation of the largest refugee crisis in the world. The partition of India led to the largest forced migration of people in the world. In the aftermath of the partition, people were displaced within the country and the polarisation of communities was the result of the conflict. The violence during the partition led to the death of millions of people and the displacement of millions more. The partition of India also led to the creation of the largest refugee crisis in the world. The partition of India led to the largest forced migration of people in the world. In the aftermath of the partition, people were displaced within the country and the polarisation of communities was the result of the conflict. The violence during the partition led to the death of millions of people and the displacement of millions more. The partition of India also led to the creation of the largest refugee crisis in the world. The partition of India led to the largest forced migration of people in the world. In the aftermath of the partition, people were displaced within the country and the polarisation of communities was the result of the conflict. The violence during the partition led to the death of millions of people and the displacement of millions more. The partition of India also led to the creation of the largest refugee crisis in the world.

History of Political Polarization After 1950 in India:

The 1950s and 1960s were a time of great political polarization in India. The country was divided into two major political camps: the Congress Party, which was in power, and the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The Congress Party was accused of being too close to the Soviet Union, while the BJP was accused of being too close to the United States. This political polarization led to a number of violent incidents, including the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi by a Hindu nationalist in 1948. The 1970s and 1980s saw a decrease in political violence, as the Congress Party and the BJP both moved to the center. However, the 1990s saw a resurgence of political polarization, as the BJP rose to power on a platform of Hindu nationalism. This led to a number of riots and terrorist attacks, including the 1993 Bombay bombings and the 2002 Gujarat riots. Today, political polarization is still a major issue in India. The country is divided between those who support the BJP and those who support the Congress Party. This division has led to a number of violent incidents, including the 2008 Mumbai attacks and the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots. Political polarization is likely to continue to be a major issue in India in the future.

Meaning of Identity Politics:

The term "identity politics" has been used in a variety of ways, but at its core, it refers to the idea that people's political views are shaped by their identities. This can include factors like race, gender, sexuality, religion, and so on. Some people argue that identity politics is a positive force because it allows marginalized groups to come together and fight for their rights. Others claim that identity politics is divisive because it pits people against each other based on their differences. There is no right or wrong answer, but it is important to be aware of how identity politics can influence the way we think about and engage with the political world. In recent years, identity politics has become increasingly prominent in the United States. This is partly due to the election of Donald Trump, who has been accused of stoking division along racial, gender, and other lines. Whether you view identity politics as a positive or negative force, it's important to be aware of how it can affect your own political views and the way you interact with the world around you. Identity politics is a political approach that emphasizes the distinctiveness of social groups based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or other factors. Identity politics can be used to promote a particular group's interests and values or to oppose discrimination against that group. In recent years, identity politics has become increasingly prominent in Western democracies, especially in the wake of the 2016 US presidential election. Some commentators have argued that identity politics is a form of tribalism that is dividing society, while others have argued that it is a legitimate form of political expression.

In recent years, the number of democracies has fallen, and democracy has retreated in virtually all regions of the world. At the same time, many authoritarian countries, led by China and Russia, have become much more assertive. Some countries that had seemed to be successful liberal democracies during the 1990s - including Hungary, Poland, Thailand, and Turkey - have slid backward toward authoritarianism. (Fukuyama, 2018)

The Arab revolts of 2010-11 disrupted dictatorships throughout the Middle East but yielded little in terms of democratization: in their wake, despotic regimes held on to power, and civil wars racked Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. More surprising and perhaps even more significant was the success of populist nationalism in elections held in 2016 by two of the world's most durable liberal democracies: the United Kingdom, where voters chose to leave the EU, and the United States, where Donald Trump scored a shocking electoral upset in the race for president. All these developments relate in some way to the economic and technological shifts of globalization. But they are also rooted in a different phenomenon: the rise of identity politics (Fukuyama, 2018)

Identity Politics in India:

Identity politics in India has been a complex and often contentious issue since the country's independence in 1947. The main fault lines have been between those who see India as a Hindu nation and those who view it as a secular, pluralistic state (Dam, 2011). The rise of Hindu nationalism in the late 20th century led to increased tensions and violence between Hindus and Muslims, and between Hindus and other minority groups such as Christians and Sikhs. The issue of identity politics came to a head in the early 21st century with the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its affiliated organizations, which promoted a Hindu nationalist agenda. This has led to a rise in religious and caste-based violence, as well as a sharp increase in anti-minority rhetoric and hate speech. The BJP's victory in the 2014 general election has further emboldened Hindu nationalists, and there have been a number of high-profile attacks on minorities, including Muslims and Dalits (a group at the bottom of the Hindu caste system). In response, there has been a backlash from secular and liberal Indians, who have formed their own political and social organizations to counter the rise of Hindu nationalism Identity Politics is a Response to Majoritarian Ideologies (*Identity Politics Is Not the Evil It Is Made Out to Be*, 2019).

Majority Identity Politics in India.

Curiously, Fukuyama, known for his neo-conservative past and Straussian philosophical moorings, celebrates India as the most luminous cradle of the diversity of human (*Politics Of Identity*, 2022), but In India, the concept of majority identity politics came into existence, after the partition of India, in 1947. The partition of India was based on the religious lines of Hindus and Muslims. The partition of India was done in order to create a separate homeland for Muslims, i.e., Pakistan. However, the partition of India led to a lot of violence and bloodshed. There were large-scale riots and mass killings. The partition of India also led to the displacement of a large number of people. After the partition of India, the Hindu majority started to assert their identity. They started to demand a separate homeland for themselves. This led to the formation of the Hindu nationalist party, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The BJP started to propagate the idea of Hindutva, which is an ideology that advocates for the supremacy of Hindu culture and values. The BJP also started to demand the construction of a Ram temple in Ajothya. The temple is believed to be the birthplace of Lord Ram. The construction of the temple was opposed by the Muslim community. This led to the demolition of the Babri Masjid, which was a 16th-century mosque. The demolition of the mosque led to large-scale riots and mass killings. The BJP also started to target the minority communities, such as Muslims and Christians. The BJP started to propagate the idea that these minority communities are not loyal to the nation.

The BJP also started to advocate for the implementation of strict laws against these minority communities. The BJP also started to target the Dalit community. The Dalits are considered to be the lowest caste in the Hindu caste system. The BJP has been successful in winning the support of the majority community. The BJP has won the support of the Hindu majority by propagating the idea of Hindutva. The BJP has also won the support of the Dalit

community by promising to uplift their socio-economic status. The BJP has also won the support of the other backward classes (OBCs). The OBCs are considered to be the lower caste in the Hindu caste system. The BJP has won the support of the OBCs by promising to provide them with reservations in government jobs and educational institutions. The use of caste as a political identity to mobilize under has been seen as divisive since the time Kanshi Ram used it as an ideology to form the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Thereafter, the accusation of “identity politics” has resurfaced whenever the matter of caste-based reservations has come up, most noticeably in relation to the Mandal Commission (*Identity Politics Is Not the Evil It Is Made Out to Be*, 2019)

The BJP has also won the support of the upper castes. The upper castes are the highest caste in the Hindu caste system. The BJP has won the support of the upper castes by promising to provide them with reservations in government jobs and educational institutions. The BJP has also won the support of the Scheduled Tribes (STs). The STs are the indigenous people of India. The BJP has won the support of the STs by promising to provide them with reservations in government jobs and educational institutions. The BJP has been successful in winning the support of the majority community by using the strategy of majority identity politics.

The BJP has used the strategy of majority identity politics to consolidate the support of the Hindu (Malik & Singh, 1992). The BJP has used the strategy of majority identity politics to target minority communities. The BJP has used the strategy of majority identity politics to target the Dalit community. The BJP has used the strategy of majority identity politics to target the other backward classes (OBCs). The BJP has used the strategy of majority identity politics to target the upper castes. The BJP has used the strategy of majority identity politics to target the Scheduled Tribes (STs). The BJP has used the strategy of majority identity politics to win the support of the majority community. The BJP has used the strategy of majority identity politics to consolidate the support of the Hindu majority.

Tools of Political Polarization:

The media:

The media can play a role in political polarization by the way it covers stories and by the way it frames issues.

social media:

Social media can also play a role in political polarization by the way it allows people to find and connect with like-minded people and by the way it allows people to share information and ideas.

political parties:

Political parties can also contribute to political polarization by the way they organize and campaign.

special interest groups:

Lobbyists and special interest groups can also contribute to political polarization by the way they try to influence politicians and the public. And Also

1. Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook.
2. News channels with a clear political bias.
3. Politicians who use divisive rhetoric to further their own agendas.
4. Religious and caste-based groups try to stir up communal tensions.
5. Economic inequality leads to feelings of disenfranchisement and resentment.
6. A lack of trust in government and institutions.
7. A history of violence and conflict.
8. The rise of populist and extremist political parties.

9. Foreign interference in the domestic political process.

10. A polarized and partisan media landscape

Majority Identity Politics' impact on Indian Democracy:

The rise of majority identity politics in India has had a number of negative impacts on democracy in the country. Perhaps most significantly, it has led to a sharp increase in communal violence and tension. This is particularly apparent in states like Gujarat (Jaffrelot, 2003), where Hindu nationalist groups have been able to stir up religious hatred and violence against minority groups like Muslims (Anand, 2005). This has led to a breakdown in social cohesion and a rise in religious extremism, both of which are very damaging to democracy. Additionally, majority identity politics has also contributed to the rise of right-wing populist politicians like Narendra Modi (Ali, 2019), who have been able to exploit communal tensions for political gain. This has further eroded the already fragile communal harmony in the country and made it even harder for India to function as a democracy. In general, majority identity politics has made it harder for India to function as a democracy and has had a number of negative impacts on the country. It has contributed to a rise in communal violence, religious extremism, and right-wing populism, all of which are very damaging to democracy. It is therefore important for Indian politicians to find ways to address the concerns of minority groups and to promote social cohesion in order to protect democracy in the country.

Political Polarization's impact on India's Democracy:

The rise of political polarization has had a significant impact on India's democracy. Political polarization refers to the division of people into two groups with opposing viewpoints. This division can be seen along party lines, ideological lines, or religious lines. In India, political polarization has led to an increase in violence, hate speech, and mistrust (Carothers & O'Donohue, 2019). This has made it difficult for the government to function effectively and has contributed to the decline of public trust in democracy. Political polarization has also had a negative impact on economic development. India is a highly diverse country with many different religions, cultures, and languages. This diversity is one of the country's strengths, but it also makes it vulnerable to division and conflict. Political polarization has made it difficult for the government to make decisions that are in the best interests of the country as a whole. This has led to a decline in economic growth and an increase in poverty. The rise of political polarization has also had a negative impact on social cohesion. Social cohesion refers to the bonds that people have with each other. These bonds can be based on shared values, shared culture, or shared experiences (Cheong et al., 2007). Political polarization has led to a decline in social cohesion as people have become more distrustful of those with different viewpoints. This has led to an increase in social tension and division. In conclusion, the rise of political polarization has had a negative impact on India's democracy. It has caused violence, hate speech, economic decline, and social division.

Conclusion:

The rise of political polarization and majority identity politics in India can be traced back to the country's independence in 1947. Since then, there have been a number of incidents and events that have contributed to the current state of affairs. The Partition of India and the subsequent violence that took place during and after it was a major turning point. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi by a Hindu nationalist in 1948 further exacerbated tensions between Hindus and Muslims. The rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and other Hindu nationalist groups in the 1980s and 1990s also played a role in stoking religious and political divisions. The current situation in India is a result of years of simmering tensions between different groups. The recent escalation of violence can be traced back to the BJP's decision to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, which was a Muslim-majority state. This move was seen as an attack on the Muslim community and led to widespread protests and violence. The BJP's policies have also been criticized for favoring the Hindu majority at the expense of other groups, such as Muslims, Christians, and Dalits.

The current state of affairs has led to a situation where there is a lack of trust and understanding between different groups. This has made it difficult for the country to move forward and address the many challenges it faces. There is no easy solution to the problem of political polarization and majority identity politics in India. However, it is important for all stakeholders to work together to find a way to move forward. This includes the government, civil society, and the media. Only by working together can India hope to overcome the divisions that have been holding it back. The above essay discusses the history of political polarization and majority identity politics in India. It argues that the current state of affairs is a result of years of simmering tensions between different groups. The essay concludes by calling for all stakeholders to work together to find a way to move forward.

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