

Cast-Based Politics

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DEFINITION:

- **CAST-BASED POLITICS** REFERS TO THE USE OF CASTE AS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN POLITICAL MOBILIZATION, REPRESENTATION, AND DECISION-MAKING. EXAMPLE, PARTIES ALIGN WITH SPECIFIC CASTES FOR VOTES, LIKE PARTY X TARGETING DALITS AND PARTY Y APPEALING TO UPPER-CASTES.
- **B.R. AMBEDKAR:** NOTED INDIAN SOCIOLOGIST AND POLITICIAN WHO ADVOCATED FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE LOWER CASTES AND PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN DRAFTING THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION.
- **M.N. SRINIVAS:** KNOWN FOR HIS WORK ON THE CONCEPT OF "DOMINANT CASTE" AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIAN SOCIETY AND POLITICS.

KEY FEATURES:

- **CASTE AS IDENTITY:** PEOPLE FEEL A STRONG CONNECTION TO THEIR CASTE, WHICH AFFECTS HOW THEY VOTE AND WHICH POLITICAL PARTIES THEY SUPPORT.
- **CASTE-BASED ALLIANCES:** POLITICAL PARTIES TEAM UP WITH OTHERS THAT HAVE A SIMILAR CASTE SUPPORT BASE TO WIN ELECTIONS.
- **RESERVATION POLICIES:** GOVERNMENTS SET ASIDE SEATS IN SCHOOLS AND JOBS FOR PEOPLE FROM DISADVANTAGED CASTES TO HELP THEM CATCH UP WITH OTHERS.
- **CASTE CLEAVAGES:** DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CASTES IMPACT DECISIONS ON LAWS AND HOW RESOURCES ARE SHARED, WHICH CAN MAKE GOVERNING MORE DIFFICULT.

IMPACT:

- **SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION:** CASTE-BASED POLITICS CAN PERPETUATE SOCIAL DIVISIONS AND HINDER NATIONAL UNITY.
- **REPRESENTATION:** PROVIDES REPRESENTATION TO HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES BUT MAY REINFORCE CASTE IDENTITIES.
- **POLICY DYNAMICS:** SHAPES POLICY PRIORITIES AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION, SOMETIMES AT THE EXPENSE OF MERIT-BASED GOVERNANCE.

CONCLUSION:

- **IN CONCLUSION,** CASTE-BASED POLITICS IS A COMPLICATED AND SOMETIMES HEATED TOPIC THAT AFFECTS HOW COUNTRIES ARE RUN, HOW PEOPLE GET ALONG, AND HOW THEY SEE THEMSELVES. IT'S IMPORTANT TO REALLY GRASP HOW IT WORKS SO WE CAN TACKLE THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS IT CREATES IN SOCIETIES WHERE CASTE DIVISIONS EXIST. BY UNDERSTANDING IT BETTER, WE CAN WORK TOWARDS BUILDING A FAIRER AND MORE UNITED SOCIETY FOR EVERYONE.