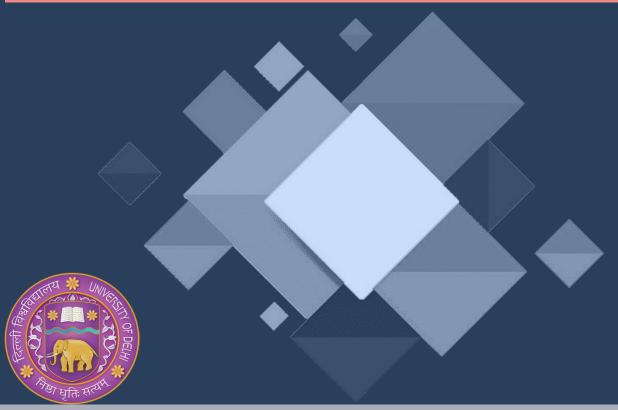# POLITICAL PROCESS IN INDIA

B.A. (HONS.) POLITICAL SCIENCE

SEMESTER-V
DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC CORE COURSE (DSC–15)

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Editorial Board
Dr. Shivu Kumar, Dr. Sukanshika Vatsa, Shaitan Singh

Content Writer
Devendra Dilip Pai

Academic Coordinator
Deekshant Awasthi

Reviewer

S.V. Ravi Kiran

Department of Distance & Continuing Education, Campus of Open Learning,
School of Open Learning, University of Delhi

SYLLABUS

Political Process in India

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LESSON 1
POLITICAL PARTIES: NATIONAL AND STATE PARTIES

Devendra Dilip Pai
Assistant Professor,
School of Open Learning,
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

• Define political parties and realise their characteristics

• Discuss the importance of political parties in India's democratic setup

• Analyse the difference between the different types of parties

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1.2 INTRODUCTION

In the vibrant democratic landscape of India, political parties have a pivotal role to play. They are the building blocks of democracy, serving as the connection between the citizens and the government. Political parties aggregate and articulate interests, mobilise voters, contest elections, and shoulder governing responsibilities. They are the vehicles through which citizens participate in the democratic process, influencing policymaking and shaping the future of the nation.

India's political system is characterised by a multi-party system, a reflection of the country's immense diversity. This system accommodates the existence of numerous national and regional parties, each catering to different ideologies, regions, and communities. The multi-party system ensures that no single party can dominate the political discourse, fostering a culture of negotiation and compromise. It allows for a more inclusive representation of the populace by ensuring that the voices of different fragments of society are heard and their interests are addressed.

National parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC) and others have a pan-Indian presence. They strive to represent the collective aspirations of all the people of India. On the other hand, regional parties like the All-India Trinamool Congress (AITC/TMC) in West Bengal, All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) in Tamil Nadu, Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, and Apna Dal in Uttar Pradesh, and, to name a few, cater to regional interests and sentiments. They too play a crucial role in India's policymaking, often influencing national policies.

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1.3   MEANING OF POLITICAL PARTY

According to Giovanni Sartori, 'A political party is defined as a political group that is officially recognised as being part of the electoral process and who can support (put forth) candidates for elections (free or not) on a regular basis.'

Encyclopedia Britannica defines a political party as a group of persons organised to acquire and exercise political power.

Lawson and Schwartz define a political party as an organisation that nominates candidates to stand for elections in its name and seeks to place representatives in the government.

Political parties are organised groups of people who have similar political views and work together to influence government policy and actions. Political parties provide a platform for public participation in governance and decision-making processes. They help in shaping public opinion and provide a structured pathway for individuals to ascend to public office. The existence of multiple political parties ensures a competitive political environment, fostering accountability and transparency in governance. They are dynamic entities, constantly evolving in response to societal changes, public sentiment, and political culture. Understanding political parties is essential for students studying political science as it provides insights into the functioning of the democratic system, the process of policymaking, and the dynamics of power distribution.

1.4   ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The role of political parties is essential in nurturing and upholding India's democracy, acting as a vital link between the government and its citizens. Political parties serve as institutions through which individuals engage in the legislative process by electing party candidates to legislative bodies.

Through elections, parties aim to win enough seats in the legislature to form a government and exercise power. Once in power, they implement their policies and programmes, influencing the direction of governance and societal development. They also encourage people to get involved in politics, which helps solve the issues that people face. Political parties are therefore essential to democratic political systems.

Based on the above definitions, the characteristics of a political party are discussed as follows:

- **Political Education and Shaping Public Opinion**: Political parties play a significant role in shaping political education and public opinion. Parties highlight issues, mobilise their members, and sometimes launch movements to address societal problems.

- **Policies and Programmes**: Political parties propose different programmes and policies, which are presented to voters in their manifestos. They condense a wide range of opinions into a few basic positions which guide their actions if they come to power.

- **Contesting Elections**: Political parties contest elections through their leaders and office-bearers as candidates for elections. The candidates propagate their party agenda and seek election.

- **Form and Run Governments:** Political parties form and run governments. The political executives, who make significant policy decisions, come from these parties. Parties appoint important members as ministers to run the government in accordance with the ideology and programme of the party.

- **Link between Government and People:** Political parties provide people with access to government machinery and welfare schemes. They act as a bridge between the government and the citizens, making it easier for ordinary people to access government services.

- **Role in Law-making**: Political parties play a crucial role in the law-making process. Whether in power or as an opposition, they debate,

amend and pass laws or acts in the legislature, shaping the legal framework of the land.

- **Keeping Government in Check:** Political parties also play a crucial role as the opposition. Political parties that do not form the government serve as the opposition, scrutinising the government's actions and policies. They hold the government accountable, questioning its decisions and proposing alternatives. This role is essential for maintaining checks and balances in a democracy, ensuring that power is not concentrated or misused. The opposition's constructive criticism and vigilance contribute to the health of a democracy.

Thus, the roles and responsibilities of a political party are not limited to capturing power and governing. Even when not in power, political parties contribute significantly to the democratic process by serving as a vigilant opposition. This understanding is crucial for understanding the roles and functions of political parties in a democracy such as India.

Political parties are dynamic and evolve with the changes in political dynamics, public sentiments, and voting behaviour. This dynamism contributes to the growth and development of some political parties while causing a decline in others.

In-Text Questions – 1

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. _____ define a political party as an organisation that nominates candidates to stand for elections in its name and seeks to place representatives in the government.

2. Political parties provide a platform for _____ in governance and decision-making processes.

3. Political parties play a significant role in shaping political _____ and public opinion.

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4. Through elections, parties aim to win enough seats in the legislature to form a _____ and exercise power.

5. Political parties contest _____ through their leaders and office-bearers as candidates for elections.

B. State True or False:

1. Political parties are organised groups of people who have different political views and work together to influence government policy and actions.

2. The role of political parties is essential in nurturing and upholding India's democracy, acting as a vital link between the government and its citizens.

3. Political parties contest elections through their leaders and office-bearers as candidates for elections.

4. The existence of multiple political parties ensures a competitive political environment, fostering accountability and transparency in governance.

5. The opposition's role is not essential for maintaining checks and balances in a democracy.

1.5 TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES

India practises multi-party democracy. According to the Election Commission of India, as of February 2024, there are 2,846 registered political parties in the country.

Understanding the various types and categories of political parties is crucial for comprehending the complexities of India's political landscape. Each type of political party plays a unique role in representing the interests and aspirations of different fragments of the population, contributing to the vibrant and diverse democracy that India is known for.

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Roughly speaking, political parties in India can be classified as national, regional, local-based on their area of reach and operations or identity-based and issue-based as per the policies, programmes and issues of the political parties.

- **National Party:** These political parties have a nationwide presence and influence. They participate in elections across the country and have a broad ideological platform that appeals to a wide cross-section of the population across the country. For example, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Indian National Congress (INC).

- **Regional Party:** These political parties primarily operate within a specific state or a small group of states. They often represent regional interests and cultural identities, including language. Their impact is mostly confined to one or a couple of states. For example, Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) in Assam and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in Andhra Pradesh.

- **Local Party:** These political parties are active at the district or municipal level. They focus on local issues and their influence is limited to a specific locality or region or a small group of regions within a state. For example, Mithilanchal Vikas Morcha in Bihar and Vidarbha Rajya Aghadi in Maharashtra.

- **Identity-based Party:** These political parties are typically formed around a particular social, ethnic, or religious identity. They aim to represent and advocate for the interests of the specific group they identify with. Their influence can be seen at local, state, or national levels, depending on the size and distribution of the group. For example, All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) and Bharatiya *Tribal Party*.

- **Issue-based Party:** These political parties are formed around a specific issue or set of issues. They aim to bring attention to these issues and advocate for policies that address them. Their influence can be seen at local, state, or national levels, depending on the relevance and scope of

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the issues they focus on. For example, Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) later renamed as Bharatiya Rashtra Samiti (BRS) had the creation of a separate state of Telangana as its single agenda for the longest time.

We will discuss national and state parties in detail further in this lesson.

1.5.1 Classification of Political Parties: National, State Parties and Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPP)

Even though political parties are classified based on their areas of reach and operations or policies and programmes, the Election Commission of India (ECI) recognises political parties as national parties and state parties along with recognising the remaining set as Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPP). Let us discuss them in detail.

National Parties: Any political party is recognised as a national party by the ECI if it fulfils any one of the following criteria:

- It secures at least 6% of the valid votes polled in any four or more states, in a general election to the Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly. In addition, it wins at least 4 seats in a general election to the Lok Sabha from any one state or more than one state.

- It wins at least 2% of seats in a general election to the Lok Sabha (11 seats) from at least 3 different states.

- It receives at least 8% of valid votes cast in a general election to the Lok Sabha or Legislative Assembly of a state in four or more states.

- It is recognised as a state party in at least four states.

As of 2024, there are 06 parties which are recognised as national parties. They are the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Aam Admi Party (AAP), Communist Party of India (Marxists) or CPI (M), and National People's Party (NPP)

State Parties: A political party is recognised as a state party by the ECI if it fulfils any of the following criteria:

- It secures at least 6% of the valid votes polled in the state at election to the Legislative Assembly. In addition, it wins at least 2 seats in the Legislative Assembly of the state concerned.

- It secures at least 6% of the valid votes polled in the general election to the Lok Sabha. In addition, it wins at least 1 seat of the Lok Sabha of the state concerned.

- It wins at least 3% (3 out of 100) of the total number of seats or at least 3 seats in the Legislative Assembly, whichever is more.

- It wins at least 1 seat in the Lok Sabha for every 25 seats or any fraction thereof allotted to that state.

- It has at least 8% of the total valid votes in the last assembly election or the Lok Sabha election from the state.

As of 2024, there are over 75 state parties across all states in India. Some of them are the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) in Goa, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in Punjab, Communist Party of India (CPI) in Kerala, and Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) in Andhra. Some parties are recognised as state parties in multiple states. For example, Janata Dal (Secular) is recognised as a state party in Karnataka, Kerala and Arunachal Pradesh while All India Trinamool Congress (AITC or TMC) is recognised as a state party in West Bengal, Tripura and Meghalaya. The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) is recognised in both Maharashtra and Nagaland.

Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPP): Apart from the national and state parties, there are numerous other parties that are registered with the ECI but have not achieved recognition as either national or state parties. These parties are referred to as Registered Unrecognised Political Parties. As of 2024, there are 2764 Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPP) in India.

1.6 ADVANTAGES OF BEING A RECOGNISED POLITICAL PARTY

Being recognised as a national party or state party by the Election Commission of India (ECI) comes with some advantages which are discussed as follows:

- **Reserved Party Symbols:** Recognition as a national party ensures that the election symbol of that party can't be used by any other political party in polls across India. In the case of a state party, it can't be used by any political party in the state where it is recognised. This helps in maintaining the party's unique identity and aids in voter recognition.

- **Star Campaigners:** Star campaigners are prominent figures nominated by political parties to campaign during elections. A political party which is recognised as either a national or state party can designate up to 40-star campaigners, while an unrecognised political party can designate only up to 20. The advantage of having more star campaigners is that the cost associated with the campaigning activities of these star campaigners is not included as a part of the election expenditure of the candidate thereby providing the candidate with more flexibility for spending.

- **Nomination Filing:** Recognised national and state parties require only one proposer to file nominations, which simplifies the election process for them while candidates of Unrecognised Political Parties require 10 proposers to file nominations.

- **Land Allotment:** Recognised national parties receive land from the government for constructing their own offices.

- **More Airtime on National Television and Radio:** National parties are entitled to more airtime on television and radio for election campaigning.

These benefits not only provide logistical and financial advantages but also enhance the party's visibility and reach, thereby aiding in its electoral

performance. It is important to note that these privileges are subject to change according to regulations and policies of the Election Commission of India's.

Conclusion

Political parties are the backbone of a democratic system like India's. They represent a wide array of ideologies and interests, reflecting the country's diverse socio-political landscape. The existence of national, state, local, identity-based, and issue-based parties underscores the multi-faceted nature of Indian politics.

The classification of parties into National Party, State Party, and Registered Unrecognised Political Party made by the Election Commission of India is a testament to the vibrant multi-party democracy in India. It encourages healthy competition among parties, thereby strengthening the democratic process.

In a multi-party democracy like India, political parties play a crucial role in representing the collective will of the people, shaping public policy, and ensuring good governance. They are instrumental in mobilising voters, facilitating political participation, and fostering democratic values among citizens. Thus, understanding the meaning, types, and classification of political parties is fundamental to comprehending the understanding of Indian politics.

In-Text Questions – 2

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. According to the Election Commission of India, as of February 2024, there are _____ registered political parties in the country.

2. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Indian National Congress (INC) are the examples of a _____ party.

3. _____ parties are active at the district or municipal level.

4. As of 2024, there are _____ parties which are recognised as national parties.

5. _____ national parties receive land from the government for constructing their own offices.

B. State True or False:

1. Issue-based political parties are formed around a specific issue or set of issues.

2. As of 2024, there are 66 state parties across all states in India.

3. Recognition as a national party ensures that the election symbol of that party can't be used by any other political party in polls across India.

4. Star campaigners are prominent figures nominated by political parties to campaign during elections.

5. National parties are entitled to more airtime on television and radio for election campaigning.

1.7 SUMMARY

- Political parties are organised groups of people who have similar political views and work together to influence government policy and actions.

- Political parties provide a platform for public participation in governance and decision-making processes. They help in shaping public opinion and provide a structured pathway for individuals to ascend to public office.

- The role of political parties is essential in nurturing and upholding India's democracy, acting as a vital link between the government and its citizens.

- Political parties serve as institutions through which individuals engage in the legislative process by electing party candidates to legislative bodies.

- Political parties are dynamic and evolve with the changes in political dynamics, public sentiments, and voting behaviour.

- India practises multi-party democracy. According to the Election Commission of India, as of February 2024, there are 2846 registered political parties in the country.

- Each type of political party plays a unique role in representing the interests and aspirations of different fragments of the population, contributing to the vibrant and diverse democracy that India is known for.

- As of 2024, there are more than 75 state parties across all states in India.

1.8   GLOSSARY

- **Political Party:** It is an organised group aiming to acquire and exercise political power, and representing different societal interests.

- **Multi-party System:** It is a political system where multiple parties exist, representing various ideologies, regions and communities.

- **National Party:** It is a political party with a nationwide presence and influence, participating in elections across the country.

- **Regional Party:** It is a political party operating primarily within a specific state or group of states, representing regional interests.

- **Election Commission of India (ECI):** It is the authority responsible for administering election processes in India, including the recognition of political parties.

1.9   ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

In-Text Questions – 1

A.

1. Lawson and Schwartz

2. Public participation

NOTES

3. Education

4. Government

5. Elections

B.

1. False

2. True

3. True

4. True

5. False

In-Text Questions – 2

A.

1. 2846

2. National

3. Local

4. 06

5. Recognised

B.

1. True

2. False

3. True

4. True

5. True

1.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is the role of political parties in Indian democracy?

2. Which are the different types of categories of political parties?

3. How does the Election Commission in India recognise or classify political parties? What are the criteria for the same?

4. How does the multi-party system in India reflect the country's diversity?

5. Discuss the advantages of being recognised as a national party or state party by the Election Commission of India.

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LESSON 2
TRENDS IN THE PARTY SYSTEM: THE CONGRESS SYSTEM

Devendra Dilip Pai
Assistant Professor,
School of Open Learning,
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

• Define the party system

• Understand the nuances of the party system in India

• Analyse the differences between the first two stages of the party system in India

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• Discuss the reasons for the dominance of the Indian National Congress and its eventual decline at the state level

2.2 INTRODUCTION

India takes pride in its flourishing democratic system, having successfully completed 18 general elections to the Lok Sabha and over 350 state assembly elections to elect its governments.

Being a multi-party democracy, India is home to a variety of political parties. Since independence, there was a notable transition in the party system in the country – from one dominant party, the Indian National Congress (INC), in the 1950s and 1960s to a large number of parties in the subsequent years followed by a bi-nodal arrangement during the coalition era. This subject examines how political parties have changed over time, as well as party structures and democracy in India.

2.3 MEANING OF PARTY SYSTEM

In political science, a party system refers to how political parties operate within a democratic country. It is the arrangement where these parties manage the government, enjoy consistent support from the public, and establish internal rules for managing finances, information and candidate selections.

The party system idea was first offered by European scholars studying the United States, such as James Bryce, Giovanni Sartori, and Moisey Ostrogorsky. They eventually extended their study to include other democracies across the globe. Factors such as the degree of political division, the impartiality of the conversion of votes into seats, and the simplicity of political competitiveness can be used to classify party systems.

2.4 TYPES OF PARTY SYSTEM

Across the world, there are several types of party systems. They are as follows:

- **One-party system**: In this system, only a single political party holds power, either by constitutional mandate or exclusive control over political authority.

  Example: China.

- **Dominant-party system**: In this system, certain parties consistently win elections, making their future defeat unlikely.

  Example: Russia.

- **Two-party system:** In this system, two main parties or alliances are often positioned on either side of the political spectrum and have the best chance of forming a majority. Other parties are usually minor or confined to specific regions.

  Example: United States.

- **Multi-party system:** In this system, multiple parties can potentially control government offices, either independently or through coalitions.

  Example: Israel.

- **Non-partisan system:** In this system, the government operates without political parties, and elections occur without party affiliations.

  Example: Micronesia.

2.5 EVOLUTION OF PARTY SYSTEM IN INDIA

India's electoral history, spanning from the first general elections to the Lok Sabha held in 1951-52 after gaining independence to the 2024 elections for the

eighteenth Lok Sabha, can be broadly categorised into four distinct electoral orders, according to the consensus among political analysts and scholars.

In the article *Congress Decline and Party Pluralism in India*, Christopher Candland (1997) wrote, 'Throughout South Asia, the national political parties that led independence movements tended to dominate government in the formative years of independence only to give way to increasingly agrarian, confessional, regional and vernacular political parties.'

India was no exception to the phenomenon. Since its inception in 1885, the Indian National Congress (INC) has wielded significant influence over the country's political landscape. As India transitioned into a republic and conducted its inaugural general election in 1951-1952, the INC maintained its stronghold over electoral politics for many years thereafter. The first two-party systems, from 1952 to 1967 and 1967 to 1989, were marked by the dominance of the Indian National Congress.

The INC dominated India's political landscape beginning with the first elections held in 1951-52. The Congress was such a powerful force that in 1952, 1957, and 1962, it won sizable majorities in practically every election to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies (except for the 1957 Kerala state assembly elections). The extent of the INC was such that the renowned political scientist Rajni Kothari, in his influential work *The Congress System in India* published in 1964, characterised the Indian party system as the 'The Congress System'. Rajni Kothari in the same paper also labelled this period as the 'One-Party Dominant System or OPDS'.

In the 1957 election, the Indian National Congress (INC) experienced its first setback in a state assembly election. However, it was the 1967 election that dealt a significant blow to the party, resulting in losses in seven assembly elections. This marked the beginning of the second-party system with the emergence of other parties especially the formation of non-congress governments in various states. During this time, other parties like Jan Sangh, Communist Party of India, RPI, Swatantra Party, Akali Dal, DMK, etc., were trying to become strong opposition forces against the Indian National Congress.

Between 1967 and 1989, a second-party system emerged. During this period, except for a short span from 1977 to 1978, the Indian National Congress remained at the helm nationally, but it faced tough challenges from various parties at the state level and lost several state assembly elections. However, it took almost ten years of unpredictable alliances and minority governments, from 1989 to 1998, for India's multi-party tendencies to shape into a new party system.

Following the 1998 elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party emerged as the largest party and declared its intention to lead a coalition of parties under the National Democratic Alliance to establish the government. The mandate was for either the National Democratic Alliance, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party, or the United Progressive Alliance, led by the Indian National Congress, to form governments in 1999, 2004, and 2009. For over two decades (1998-2014), India experienced a bi-nodal party system.

In May 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured the first single-party majority in the lower house of India's parliament (the Lok Sabha) in thirty years. Led by prime ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi, the BJP's triumph sparked a discourse among political analysts and scholars on whether the country's electoral landscape was undergoing a fundamental change. Between 1989 and 2014, Indian politics was characterised by coalition governments. During this period, no single party managed to attain a parliamentary majority independently, necessitating alliances with numerous pre- and post-election partners to form governing coalitions. This period was also marked by a stark rise in the electoral fortunes of the BJP.

The 2014 Lok Sabha elections signalled a break from the previous pattern and the start of a new era in India's party system: the domination of the BJP. Milan Vaishnav and Jamie Hintson (2019) wrote a paper titled *The Dawn of India's Fourth Party System* that studied the reasons for the dominance of the BJP and justified BJP's domination as the emergence of the fourth party system in India.

According to Pradeep Chhibber, a dominant party system is characterised by the prolonged electoral dominance of a single party, which becomes central to the functioning of the political system. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections,

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the Bharatiya Janata Party outperformed itself. From 2014 to 2019, the party increased its victory margin, going from winning 282 seats with a total vote share of 31.34% in 2014 to 303 seats with a total vote share of 37.76%. The BJP also won several state assembly elections, prompting media and political observers like Suhas Palshikar to refer to this as the beginning of a new party system and the emergence of India's second dominant party system.

In-Text Questions – 1

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. Israel is an example of a _____ system.

2. In _____ system, government operates without political parties, and elections occur without party affiliations.

3. In May 2014, the _____ secured the first single-party majority in the lower house of India's parliament (the Lok Sabha) in thirty years.

4. In the 1957 election, the Indian National Congress (INC) experienced its first setback in a _____ election.

5. Between _____ and 2014, Indian politics was characterised by coalition governments.

B. State True or False:

1. China is an example of a dominant-party system.

2. Since its inception in 1885, the Indian National Congress (INC) has wielded significant influence over the country's political landscape.

3. The first two-party systems, from 1952 to 1967 and 1967 to 1989, were marked by the dominance of the Indian National Congress.

4. Between 1967 and 1989, a second-party system emerged.

5. The 2018 Lok Sabha elections signalled a break from the previous pattern and the start of a new era in India's party system: the domination of the BJP.

2.6 THE CONGRESS SYSTEM

Rajni Kothari's concept of the Congress System in India, which emerged in the mid-1960s, refers to a period characterised by the dominance of the Indian National Congress party in the country's political landscape. This dominance was not merely electoral but extended to various spheres of society, including the bureaucracy, media, and economy. The Congress, under the leadership of figures like Jawaharlal Nehru and later his daughter, Indira Gandhi, managed to establish a hegemonic political structure, effectively side-lining opposition parties and shaping the trajectory of Indian politics.

The Indian National Congress's overwhelming victory in the first four Lok Sabha general elections (1952, 1957, 1961, and 1967) and the polling results of state legislative assemblies during that time demonstrated the party's dominance. The Congress held an excess of a two-thirds majority of members in the Lok Sabha (364 seats in 1952, 371 seats in 1957, and 361 seats in 1962) in the first three general elections; however, this diminished to 283 seats in 1967. Its vote share in the first three elections ranged from 44% to 48% (45% in 1952; 47.8% in 1957; and 44.7% in 1962); in the fourth election, it was 40.8%. The Congress also won all the state assembly elections during this period. The only exceptions were Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland and Kerala. They were dominated by the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, the Naga National Organisation in Nagaland and the Communist Party of India in Kerala.

It was in 1959 that the INC dismissed India's first democratically elected government with a full majority. The Communist Party of India (CPI) won the 1957 state assembly elections in Kerala. In the 114-membered Kerala assembly, the Communists won in 60 constituencies and were supported by 5 independents.

Rajni Kothari argued that this system was not just a result of electoral victories but also a product of the Congress party's adeptness at co-opting diverse interests and forging alliances across various sections of society. He, however, also criticised the Congress System for encouraging a culture of reliance on a

single political body and suppressing true democratic rivalry. Kothari's findings shed light on the characteristics of Indian democracy and the threats to pluralism and democratic principles that a dominant political party possess.

The Indian National Congress's stronghold and dominance in Indian politics from 1952 to 1967 can be attributed to several factors, such as:

- **Freedom Struggle Legacy:** The INC played a central role in India's struggle for independence from British colonial rule. At that time, it wasn't a mere political party but an umbrella organisation which was more like a political movement. Its leaders, such as Lokmanya Tilak, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sardar Patel, enjoyed widespread public support and were iconic figures in the Indian nationalist movement. This legacy of the freedom struggle contributed to the INC's credibility and trust among the Indian populace.

- **Mass Base and Grassroots Organisation:** The INC had a well-established grassroots organisation with a presence in rural and urban areas across the country. It effectively mobilised support from various sections of society, including peasants, workers and intellectuals. The party's extensive network of local leaders and workers helped in maintaining its dominance at the grassroots level.

- **Leadership:** The leadership of figures like Jawaharlal Nehru, who served as India's first Prime Minister, and later, Indira Gandhi, played a crucial role in consolidating the INC's dominance. Nehru's vision of secularism, socialism, and non-alignment resonated with a broad spectrum of the Indian population, while Indira Gandhi's assertive leadership style further solidified the party's position.

- **Coalition Building:** The INC adopted a big-tent approach, accommodating diverse interests and ideologies within its fold. It formed alliances with regional and ideological partners, such as the Socialist Party and various regional parties, to broaden its support base. This inclusivity helped in maintaining the party's dominance by preventing the emergence of formidable opposition forces.

- **Economic Policies:** The INC pursued policies aimed at economic development and social welfare, such as the Five-Year Plans, land reforms, and the establishment of public sector enterprises. These initiatives, coupled with the party's focus on social justice and poverty alleviation, resonated with the aspirations of the Indian masses and contributed to its electoral success.

- **Weak Opposition:** During this period, the opposition parties were relatively fragmented and lacked a cohesive strategy to challenge the INC's dominance effectively. Internal divisions, ideological differences, and leadership struggles hindered the opposition's ability to present a united front against the Congress party.

Overall, a combination of historical legacy, organisational strength, effective leadership, inclusive politics, and policy initiatives enabled the Indian National Congress to maintain its stronghold and dominance in Indian politics during the period from 1952 to 1967.

2.7 EMERGENCE OF NON-CONGRESS PARTIES

The INC strength had already started wobbling in more than a couple of states apart from Kerala. In three INC-dominated states, Orissa (now Odisha) in 1952, the pre-1956 (presidency) state of Madras (now Chennai) in 1952 and Madhya Pradesh in 1962, the INC fell short of a majority. The year 1967 marks a break-off point. Though the Indian National Congress' vote share fell to 40.8% in the 1967 general elections to the Lok Sabha, the closest rival in the Lok Sabha was the Swantantra Party led by the former Congressman and last governor-general of India, C Rajagopalachari scored 8.67% votes.

The period following the 1967 elections marked a significant turning point in Indian politics as it was characterised by the emergence of non-Congress governments in several states. The 1967 elections were the first elections in India after the death of India's first Prime Minister and the leader of the Indian

National Congress. Even with a 40.8% vote share, the seat share of the INC fell by 78 seats. From 361 seats in 1962, the INC managed to win 283 seats in the house of 520. It was also the first election under the new leadership of Indira Gandhi, the daughter of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

INC's top leadership also faced brutal defeat. At the Centre, seven members of Indira Gandhi's government lost their seats. Despite maintaining its position at the Centre, with a diminished representation in the Lok Sabha, the INC faced electoral defeat in several Indian states. This shift reflected changing socio-political dynamics and growing discontent with the INC's monopoly on power.

According to the journalist, Hiranmay Karlekar (1967), the emergence of the new political parties was a very hopeful sign for Indian democracy. Throughout the period from 1967 to 1989, though the INC seemed losing power in states across India (and regaining in some) nevertheless it continued to have very strong command over the centre. Except for the post-emergency period (1977-79), which saw the formation of the first non-Congress government under the tenure of Prime Minister Morarji Desai, the former Congressman and a challenger to Indira Gandhi within the INC, Indira Gandhi continued to thwart all dissent and factionalism within the party and lead it with an iron fist.

The year 1969 marked another pivotal moment in the political history of India with a split in the Indian National Congress (INC). The split was triggered by internal power struggles and ideological differences within the Congress leadership, primarily between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and senior party members known as the 'Syndicate'. Tensions had been simmering within the party over issues such as economic policies, distribution of power and leadership style. These tensions came to a head when Indira Gandhi was ousted from the party presidency by the Syndicate-led faction, leading her to break away and form a new faction called the 'Congress (R)' or 'Congress (Requisitionists)'.

The split in the Congress party had far-reaching consequences, leading to a significant realignment of political forces in India. Indira Gandhi's faction, which represented a more populist and socialist-leaning agenda, garnered substantial support among grassroots workers and marginalised communities.

This factionalism culminated in the historic 1971 general elections, where Indira Gandhi's Congress (R) secured a resounding victory, consolidating her position as a dominant political figure in India. Indira Gandhi came back with a bang in the 1971 general elections with 352 seats with a 43.68% vote share eclipsing her nearest rival Bharatiya Jana Sangh who could secure 22 seats with a vote share of 7.35%.

This period also saw the maximum number of big-ticket political decisions taken under the stewardship of Indira Gandhi from the nationalisation of banks (1969, 1980) to the Emergency (1975), from the Green Revolution (1968) to the Bangladesh Liberation War (1971), and from the *Garibi Hatao* (1971) and Twenty-Point Programme (1975) to the Operation Blue Star (1984). The tenure also saw several changes in the Constitution of India with the Right to Property being removed as a fundamental right and additions of the words 'Secular' and 'Socialist' to the Preamble. There was the emergence of coalition governments in states. This emergence of coalition governments in states faced significant challenges, primarily stemming from a lack of experience in governance and the complexities of coalitional politics. Inexperienced leaders grappled with the intricacies of managing diverse alliances and balancing competing interests, leading to frequent changes in government and a sense of instability. Additionally, coalitional politics posed inherent challenges in decision-making and policy implementation, often resulting in gridlock and inefficiency. These factors collectively contributed to the struggles faced by coalitional governments in the states during this period.

After the demise of Indira Gandhi, her son, Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister. Rajiv Gandhi's ascent to power as Prime Minister in 1984 marked a new era for the Indian National Congress, demonstrating the party's resilience and flexibility in Indian politics. His direction gave the party a feeling of vitality and modernity that drew in younger supporters. Under his leadership and a sympathy wave in the backdrop of the death of Indira Gandhi, the INC amassed 414 seats out of 541 in the Lok Sabha from 353 seats in the previous elections demonstrating the party's broad appeal and organisational strength. NT Rama

Rao's Telugu Desam Party (TDP) was a distant second with 30 seats and 4.31% vote share. The Bharatiya Janata Party, the new avatar of Bharatiya Jana Sangh managed to get only 2 seats and a 7.74% vote share. Rajiv Gandhi's vision for India was a break from INC's socialist tradition; it placed a strong emphasis on economic liberalisation, social reform, and technological growth. His initiatives to decentralise governance, encourage foreign investment, and implement computerisation heralded a change in direction toward a more progressive and internationally focused agenda.

However, Rajiv Gandhi's tenure was not without controversy. His government faced criticism for its mishandling of several high-profile issues, including the Bofors case. The incident damaged popular confidence in the Congress party and damaged the government's credibility leading to a huge loss in the 1989 Lok Sabha elections where the INC under Rajiv Gandhi fell under the 200-mark in terms of seats and under 40% in terms of vote share. The INC managed to win 197 out of 529 seats in the Lok Sabha elections with a 39.53% vote share with the former Congressman Vishwanath Pratap Singh's newly formed multi-party coalition named Janata Dal, securing 143 votes with a 17.79% vote share. Furthermore, his administration's mismanagement of the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka came under heavy criticism. A suicide bomber connected to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) assassinated him in 1991, in the middle of the Lok Sabha election campaign ending his life in an act of terrorism. His demise ended the second-party system in India.

The reasons for the decline of the Indian National Congress from 1967 in states can be attributed to several factors, such as:

- **Regionalism and Identity Politics:** The emergence of regional parties like the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu and the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab reflected growing regional aspirations and identity politics. These parties capitalised on regional grievances and linguistic-cultural identities, eroding the Congress's dominance in these states.

- **Socialist and Communist Opposition:** Socialist and Communist parties, along with their allies, formed strong opposition fronts in states like West Bengal and Kerala. They criticised INC's perceived elitism and failure to address the needs of marginalised communities, garnering significant support among the working class and rural populace.

- **Discontent with Congress Rule**: The prolonged INC at both the centre and the states led to growing discontent among sections of the population, particularly farmers, labourers, and marginalised communities. Issues such as land reforms, poverty alleviation, and social justice remained unresolved, fuelling anti-Congress sentiments.

- **Economic Challenges and Agrarian Distress**: Agrarian distress and economic challenges, including food shortages and inflation, contributed to disillusionment with the INC rule. The party's inability to effectively address these issues further weakened its electoral prospects, especially in agrarian states like Punjab and Bihar.

- **Internal Factionalism and Leadership Crisis**: The INC faced internal factionalism and leadership challenges, with competing factions vying for power within the party. This infighting weakened the Congress's organisational coherence and undermined its electoral performance in several states.

- **Emergence of Strong Opposition Alliances**: Opposition parties formed strategic alliances and coalitions to challenge the dominance of the Indian National Congress. These alliances brought together diverse political forces, including regional parties, socialists, and communists, presenting a formidable electoral challenge to the INC in various states.

- **Shift in Voter Preferences**: The 1967 elections witnessed a significant shift in voter preferences, with voters increasingly opting for non-Congress alternatives. Factors such as regional pride, ideological considerations, and disillusionment with the INC rule influenced voter behaviour, leading to the decline of the Congress in several states.

NOTES

Conclusion

The evolution of India's party system reflects the dynamic interplay of historical legacies, socio-political transformations, and leadership dynamics. From the dominance of the Indian National Congress (INC) in the early years of independence to the emergence of non-Congress parties in the state and the subsequent rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), India's political landscape has undergone significant changes. The 'Congress System', characterised by the INC's hegemony, gave way to a multi-party system marked by the increasing influence of regional and ideological parties in state politics. Factors such as regionalism, identity politics, economic challenges, and leadership crises contributed to the decline of the INC's dominance and led to the emergence of alternative political forces which gave birth to the third-party system in India.

In-Text Questions – 2

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. The Indian National Congress's overwhelming victory in the first four Lok Sabha general elections (1952, 1957, 1961, and_____) and the polling results of state legislative assemblies during that time also demonstrate the party's dominance.

2. The Communist Party of India (CPI) had won the 1957 state assembly elections in_____.

3. The period following the 1967 elections marked a significant turning point in Indian politics, as it was characterised by the emergence of _____ governments in several states.

4. The 1967 elections were the first election in India after the death of India's _____ Prime Minister and the leader of the Indian National Congress.

5. INC faced internal _____ and leadership challenges, with competing factions vying for power within the party.

B. State True or False:

1. It was in 1969 that the INC dismissed India's first democratically elected government with a full majority.

2. NT Rama Rao's Telugu Desam Party (TDP) was a distant second with 30 seats and a 4.31% vote share.

3. Socialist and Communist parties, along with their allies, formed strong opposition fronts in states like West Bengal and Karnataka.

4. Agrarian distress and economic challenges, including food shortages and inflation, contributed to disillusionment with the INC rule.

5. The INC played a central role in India's struggle for independence from British colonial rule.

2.8   SUMMARY

- In political science, a party system refers to how political parties operate within a democratic country.

- The party system idea was first offered by European scholars studying the United States, such as James Bryce, Giovanni Sartori, and Moisey Ostrogorsky.

- India's electoral history, spanning from the first general elections to the Lok Sabha held in 1951-52 after gaining independence to the 2024 elections for the eighteenth Lok Sabha, can be broadly categorised into four distinct electoral orders, according to the consensus among political analysts and scholars.

- INC dominated India's political landscape beginning with the first elections held in 1951-52.

- In the 1957 election, the Indian National Congress (INC) experienced its first setback in a state assembly election.

- Between 1967 and 1989, a second-party system emerged. During this period, except for a short span from 1977 to 1978, the Indian National Congress remained at the helm nationally, but it faced tough challenges from various parties at the state level and lost several state assembly elections.

- In May 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured the first single-party majority in the lower house of India's parliament (the Lok Sabha) in thirty years.

- According to Pradeep Chhibber, a dominant party system is characterised by the prolonged electoral dominance of a single party, which becomes central to the functioning of the political system.

- Rajni Kothari's concept of the Congress System in India, which emerged in the mid-1960s, refers to a period characterised by the dominance of the Indian National Congress party in the country's political landscape.

- It was in 1959 that the INC dismissed India's first democratically elected government with a full majority.

- Kothari's findings shed light on the characteristics of Indian democracy and the threats to pluralism and democratic principles that a dominant political party possess.

- The period following the 1967 elections marked a significant turning point in Indian politics, as it was characterised by the emergence of non-Congress governments in several states.

- INC's top leadership also faced brutal defeat. At the Centre, seven members of Indira Gandhi's government lost their seats.

- The split in the Congress party had far-reaching consequences, leading to a significant realignment of political forces in India.

2.9   GLOSSARY

- **Party System**: It is the structure and dynamics of political parties within a democratic country.

- **Dominant-party system**: It is a system where certain parties consistently win elections, making their defeat unlikely.

- **Two-party system**: It is a system where two main parties dominate and have the best chance of forming a majority.

- **Multi-party system**: It is a system where multiple parties can potentially control government offices, independently or through coalitions.

- **Non-partisan system**: It is a system where the government operates without political parties, and elections occur without party affiliations.

- **Regionalism**: It refers to the focus on regional interests and identities in politics, often leading to the emergence of regional parties.

- **Coalition government**: It is a government formed by multiple political parties, usually due to no single party achieving a majority.

2.10   ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

In-Text Questions – 1

A.

1. Multi-party

2. Non-partisan

3. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

4. State assembly

5. 1989

NOTES

B.

   1. False

   2. True

   3. True

   4. True

   5. False

In-Text Questions – 2

A.

   1. 1967

   2. Kerala

   3. Non-Congress

   4. First

   5. Factionalism

B.

   1. False

   2. True

   3. False

   4. True

   5. True

2.11 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What are the different types of party systems?

2. What were the reasons for the domination of the Indian National Congress in the first two decades of independence?

3. Write a note on the Congress System.

4. What were the reasons for the decline of the Indian National Congress in the 1967 elections?

5. Analyse how the Indian National Congress maintained its dominance from 1952 to 1967.

6. Discuss the key turning points in the emergence of non-Congress parties in India.

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LESSON 3
TRENDS IN THE PARTY SYSTEM: THE ASCENDENCY OF BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY

Devendra Dilip Pai
Assistant Professor,
School of Open Learning,
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

• Recognise the third and the fourth phase of the party system in India

• Understand the reasons for the decline of the Indian National Congress

• Analyse the reasons for the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party

• Evaluate the Party System in India

3.2 INTRODUCTION

The transition from the Indian National Congress-dominated party system in India until 1989 to the bi-nodal system that began in 1998 reflects a fundamental shift in the country's political landscape. The 'Congress System', characterised by the Indian National Congress' hegemony, was marked by a centralised leadership structure, coalition building, and a broad ideological tent that accommodated diverse interests. However, by the late 1980s, factors such as regionalism, identity politics, and economic challenges eroded the Congress's dominance, leading to the emergence of non-Congress parties in several states. This fragmentation of the political landscape paved the way for the bi-nodal system, where two main parties or alliances, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress, competed for power at the national level. From 1998, India entered the bi-nodal party system. The bi-nodal system reflected the increased polarisation of Indian politics along ideological and regional lines, with the BJP and INC emerging as the two poles of political competition. Eventually the BJP's emergence and rise to prominence, particularly after its single-party majority in the 2014 general elections, marked a departure from the INC's long-standing dominance and signalled the emergence of a new era in Indian politics and also the fourth-party system in India.

3.3 COALITION ERA

The 1989 Lok Sabha elections marked a significant shift in Indian politics as the Congress party, led by Rajiv Gandhi, faced a major setback, winning only 197 seats out of 543. The fragmented verdict led to the formation of a coalition government of United Front under the leadership of the Janata Dal, with Vishwanath Pratap Singh as Prime Minister. The United Front comprised of Janata Dal and regional parties like the AGP, DMK and TDP. The BJP and the left parties offered outside support to the VP Singh government.

This was perhaps independent India's first coalition government (as in 1977, the parties had fought elections under a common name and symbol of Janata Party). However, the government's tenure was short-lived, due to internal differences and controversies, and VP Singh lost the majority in the house.

Chandra Shekhar seized the moment and left the government while forming his new party, Samajwadi Janata Dal or Janata Dal (Socialist), and with the mere support of 64 MPs, formed the new government with the support of Rajiv Gandhi-led Indian National Congress. The experiment failed in 16 months, and elections were held again. INC secured 244 seats, with the BJP finishing with 120 seats.

The 1991 elections were held against the backdrop of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. The Indian National Congress, staged a comeback, winning a surprise victory and forming the government with the support of regional allies. The Indian National Congress won 244 of the 534 seats with 36.40% vote share while BJP was a distant second with 120 seats and 20.07% vote share.

However, Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's tenure was distinguished by economic liberalisation and structural reforms, including the dismantling of the License, Quota, Permit Raj and the opening of the Indian economy to globalisation.

A hung parliament was the outcome of the Lok Sabha elections in 1996, when no single party was able to win a clear majority. Though it was unable to secure a majority, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as the single largest party with 161 out of the 543 seats riding the Ramjanmabhumi movement wave while the Indian National Congress secured 140 seats though the INC vote share was at 28.80% was still higher than BJP's 20.29% vote share.

It was the first time BJP had overtaken the INC as the single largest party and it was here that Atal Bihari Vajpayee became the first non-Congress leader to become the Prime Minister of India (previously all governments were led by former Indian National Congress leaders). But the experiment was very short-lived as Vajpayee could not garner a support of the majority and eventually the government fell in 13 days. As a result, the United Front, a coalition government

headed by Janata Dal leader HD Deve Gowda formed. However, because of internal conflicts and the lack of backing from coalition allies, his government was only in place for 9 months.

In 1997, INC took out support from the government and following the collapse of the Deve Gowda led government, Inder Kumar Gujral became Prime Minister of the United Front government once again with the support from INC. Gujral's tenure as Prime Minister was short-lived, as the INC pulled out of support within seven months of the formation of the government which made the government last only around 11 months.

It took nearly 10 years of churning from 1989 to 1998 for the formation of India's next party system. In these years of coalition, several factors dominated the evolution of party system such as:

- **Frequent Shifting of Parties and Allies:** During the coalition era, this phenomenon became widespread, with politicians often changing parties or parties changing allies to gain power or benefits, leading to political instability and undermining the credibility of elected representatives.

- **Fragmentation of Political Landscape**: The decline of the Indian National Congress's dominance led to the rise of numerous regional and smaller parties. These parties often represented specific local or regional interests, which necessitated coalition politics as no single party could secure a majority on its own.

- **Rise of Regional Parties**: Regional parties such as the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Samajwadi Party (SP), and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) gained significant influence during this period. They capitalised on regional issues and identities, contributing to the increasingly fragmented political scenario.

- **Mandal Commission:** The implementation of the Mandal Commission report in 1990, which recommended reservations for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in government jobs and educational institutions, led to heightened caste-based mobilisation.

- **Booth Capturing and Electoral Malpractices**: During this period, electoral malpractices such as booth capturing were rampant. Powerful political actors would capture polling booths to manipulate votes in their favour, undermining the democratic process and eroding public trust in elections.

- **Economic Challenges, Liberalisation and Reforms:** The early 1990s witnessed severe economic challenges, including a balance of payments crisis. The economic liberalisation policies introduced in 1991 under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh transformed the Indian economy. These reforms also had political implications, as new economic policies broke monopolies, it created shifts in political alliances and voter bases, influencing party strategies and coalition formations.

- **Media and Communication:** The proliferation of electronic media in the 1990s changed the way politics was conducted. The increasing influence of television and the rise of private channels allowed for greater political engagement and awareness among the public, which parties had to adapt to in their strategies and communication.

These factors collectively contributed to the complex and dynamic political environment of the coalition era, paving the way for the eventual establishment of a new party system in India by 1998.

3.4 BI-POLAR OR THE BI-NODAL SYSTEM

The BJP quickly adapted to the political landscape by forming alliances, leading to the formation of a minority coalition government under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on March 19, 1998. This coalition was called as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and controlled 265 seats. This coalition government relied on the support of various parties, including the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the National Conference (NC), to stay in power.

In the 1998 elections, the BJP increased its seats from 161 to 182, while the Congress only managed to gain one seat, reaching a total of 141 seats. The BJP-led minority coalition government consisted of 13 pre-poll (including two independents) and 9 post-poll allies (including five one-MP parties) and was dependent on the support or abstention in confidence votes of at least the TDP and the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. Though the INC still won 25.82% of the vote which was slightly more than the BJP's vote share of 25.59%, the formation of the NDA marked a new chapter in the history of Indian politics and also the cementing of India's new party system which was a bi-nodal or a bi-polar system with the BJP and INC being the two poles around which smaller parties form a coalition or a bloc.

In 1998, Sonia Gandhi became the President of the Indian National Congress, a fragmented INC then ruled just four states (Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Mizoram and Nagaland) while it had 141 members in the Lok Sabha. The BJP-led government fell within 13 months in April 1999 when the AIADMK withdrew its support, resulting in the government losing a no-confidence motion by just one vote. Following the fall of the BJP-led government, INC attempted to form a Congress-led government but was unsuccessful due to a lack of support from other parties.

In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) faced off against the Congress-led alliance. The NDA, with a more structured alliance of 24 parties, won 302 seats, with the BJP alone winning 182 seats (same number as last time. In contrast, the Congress-led alliance, won 137 seats, with the Indian National Congress receiving 114 seats. Despite the decline in seat share, the INC remained the single largest party in terms of vote share, with 28.3% to BJP's 23.75 % vote share. 1999 marked the first time in independent India that a non-INC government completed one full term in the office.

During his tenure, Vajpayee's government focused on various policy initiatives aimed at promoting economic growth, infrastructure development, and social welfare. The government continued with economic reforms initiated

in the previous decade, including liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation measures. Vajpayee's administration emphasised infrastructure development, with initiatives such as the Golden Quadrilateral project, aimed at connecting major cities through a network of highways.

In the 2004 general election, INC and the BJP continued its electoral alliance. The Congress-led alliance, with the Left Front's support, was able to form a government. The Congress won 145 seats with a 26.53% vote share, while the BJP took 138 seats with a 22.16% vote share. Following the election, the Congress-led alliance which had won 218 seats as opposed to NDA's 181 was renamed the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). While it could not breach the majority mark on its own, it took support of the Samajwadi Party and ensured Dr. Manmohan Singh served as Prime Minister for the full five-year term.

In the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, the UPA and NDA alliances competed again. The Congress-led UPA was made up of 11 parties, whereas the BJP-led NDA had 8. The UPA and its allies won 262 seats with the INC winning 206 seats with 28.55% vote share and, just short of a majority. In contrast, the BJP won 116 seats with 18.80 % vote share and NDA getting 159 seats. The UPA formed a government with external support from parties such as the SP, BSP, RJD, JD (S), and Independents, and Dr. Manmohan Singh became the Prime Minister for the second consecutive time in spite of the left pulling out support and served an entire five-year term.

The tenure of Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister of India from 2004 to 2014 was marked by significant achievements as well as numerous challenges, characterised by a mix of economic growth and policy innovations. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), Aadhar, Commonwealth Games and National Food Security Act were the highlights of the tenure.

Several factors dominated the two decades of the bi-nodal party system, marked by the alternation of power between the BJP-led government under Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the UPA-led government under Manmohan Singh such as:

Stable Governance amid Challenges

Despite coalition pressures and numerous challenges, both governments managed to maintain stability and continuity in governance. Vajpayee's tenure achieved notable success in policy implementation, while Singh's tenure saw significant welfare and transparency reforms.

Broad Ideological Framework or Blocs

The political landscape during this period was defined by broad ideological frameworks. The NDA, under Vajpayee, positioned itself primarily as an anti-Congress coalition, focusing on alternative governance models and policies. Conversely, the UPA, under Singh, positioned itself as an anti-BJP alliance, emphasising inclusive growth to counter the BJP's ideological stance.

Continuation of Economic and Welfare Policies

Regardless of the change of coalition, on the policy front, the administrations continued and expanded economic and welfare policies started by the previous governments. There was no stark difference between the economic and social policies of the two coalitions.

Limitations on Decision-making due to Coalition Politics

Both the Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh administrations faced significant challenges due to coalition politics. Managing diverse coalitions required constant negotiation and compromise to maintain unity. Vajpayee's National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and Singh's United Progressive Alliance (UPA) both had to appease various regional and smaller parties, which often led to policy compromises and occasional gridlocks.

These factors collectively shaped the bi-nodal party system in India, reflecting a complex interplay of coalition politics, ideological debates, governance challenges, and policy continuities from the late 1990s to the early 2010s.

In-Text Questions – 1

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. The 1989 Lok Sabha elections resulted in a fragmented verdict, leading to the formation of a coalition government of _____ under the leadership of Vishwanath Pratap Singh.

2. In 1996, the BJP emerged as the single largest party with _____ seats, but Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government fell after _____ days.

3. The Indian National Congress won _____ seats in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, while the BJP-led NDA secured _____ seats.

4. The tenure of Prime Minister _____ was marked by significant economic liberalisation and structural reforms, including the dismantling of the License, Quota, Permit Raj.

5. In the 2004 general election, the Congress-led alliance won _____ seats, while the BJP-led NDA won _____ seats.

B. State True or False:

1. The Janata Dal-led United Front government was supported by the BJP and the left parties.

2. The Indian National Congress won 244 seats in the 1991 elections with a 36.40% vote share.

3. The NDA government under Atal Bihari Vajpayee fell in April 2000.

4. Sonia Gandhi became the President of the Indian National Congress in 1999.

5. The 2009 Lok Sabha elections saw the BJP winning more seats than the Congress-led UPA.

3.5 EMERGENCE AND DOMINATION OF BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY

Pradeep Chhibber in 'The Rise of the Second Dominant Party System in India: BJPs New Social Coalition in 2019' described BJP's ascent as BJP's emergence

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as the new dominant party marks a significant shift in India's political landscape, challenging the long-standing dominance of the Congress party.

The Bharatiya Janata Party was established in 1980. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) founded by Syama Prasad Mookerjee in 1951 served as the party's predecessor. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh received 3.06% of the vote in the first general election, electing three MPs, including Dr. Mookerjee. The Jana Sangh was recognised as a national party.

The party continued to grow organically over the years. In 1962, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh elected 14 MPs with a vote percentage of 6.44%. 1964 is regarded as a watershed moment for the party because it was during this year that the 'Principle and Policy' draft of 'Integral Humanism', which went on to become the foundation of the Bharatiya Janata Party's political philosophy, was conceptualised by party ideologue Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya.

The fourth general election occurred in 1967. At this point, Bharatiya Jana Sangh was the second-largest political party. With the election of 35 party members to the Lok Sabha, the vote percentage increased to 9.41%. Jana Sangh also rose to second place in the Legislative Assemblies, with 268 MLAs on board. In March 1967, the first non-Indian National Congress government was formed, which included the Jana Sangh. Governments were later formed in Punjab, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh, with the Jana Sangh participating in each.

The Janata Party was formed in 1977, when the Bharatiya Jana Sangh merged with a few other parties to challenge Indira Gandhi. Indira Gandhi lost the elections, and the newly formed Janata Party formed the government. The Janata Party experiment was on the verge of collapse due to power politics and inter-party rivalry, which had then evolved into intra-party rivalry.

Following the dissolution of the Janata Party in 1980, its members formed the BJP and elected Atal Bihari Vajpayee as its first President. When the BJP ran for the first time in the Lok Sabha as an independent party in 1984, it won only

two seats, which was no match for the exceptional performance of the Indian National Congress that year, which won 414 seats.

Over a period, the Bharatiya Janata Party emerged as a challenger to the Indian National Congress' dominance. It gained 85 seats in 1989, and 120 seats in 1991 respectively.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee formed a 13-day government in 1996 when BJP for the first-time tasted power in national politics. Though it failed to retain power, in the subsequent 1998 elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party emerged as the single-largest party and staked its claim to form the government, leading a coalition of parties known as the National Democratic Alliance. The subsequent Lok Sabha elections in 1999, 2004, and 2009 resulted in mandates for either the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance or the Indian National Congress-led United Progressive Alliance.

The Lok Sabha elections of 2014 marked a significant shift in India's political landscape, ushering in a new phase with the BJP emerging as the dominant force while the INC faced an unprecedented decline. From 1989 to 2009, India experienced seven Lok Sabha elections, all of which resulted in either minority governments or coalition governments. However, the 2014 elections were a turning point, as for the first time since 1984, a single party—the BJP—secured a majority on its own in the Lok Sabha with 282 seats and 31% vote share. In contrast, the Indian National Congress faced a historic defeat, hitting a record low winning only 44 seats and 19.31% vote share. This was the first time since 1984 that a single party had won an outright majority on its own, without needing coalition partners to form a government.

The BJP's success continued in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. In 2014, the party won 282 seats with a 31.34% vote share, which increased to 303 seats with a 37.36% vote share in 2019 while the INC's increased its tally to 52 from 44 in 2014 and the vote share at 19.49% from 19.31% in 2014. Additionally, the BJP also secured victories in several state assembly elections during this period.

In the one decade under the new single party rule, India witnessed significant economic growth, and efforts in financial inclusion along with bold political decisions. Internationally, India played a proactive role including the presidency of United Nations Security Council and G20. Additionally, India's firm management of border tensions with Pakistan and China along with the tactful management of COVID-19 were much appreciated.

Despite facing setbacks in some states, the BJP led NDA secured a victory in the 2024 general elections, demonstrating its robust electoral strategy and national appeal. In comparison to the 2019 elections, the BJP saw a marginal decline in its vote share, from 37.4% to 36.1%, reflecting the regional challenges it encountered. However, the party's ability to maintain a strong presence in crucial states and leverage its organisational strength allowed it to retain a significant portion of its seats in the Lok Sabha. While the seat tally slightly decreased from 303 in 2019 to 241 in 2024, the BJP's strategic alliances and targeted campaigning in swing regions helped it to secure a decisive majority ensuring the BJP led NDA alliance reaching 293 seats and a vote share of 42.5%.

The Indian National while making significant gains in several states, saw their overall seats increase to 99 from 52 seats in 2019. Though the vote share increased slightly to 21.19% from 19.49%, the INC led Indian National Developmental Inclusive alliance (INDI alliance) won 237 seats with a 40.6% vote share. This improvement translated into an increased seat share, with the INC securing 110 seats, up from 52 in 2019. Although the opposition made notable strides, their gains were insufficient to overcome the BJP's strategic and organisational strengths, which ultimately secured its victory in the 2024 elections. After May 2024, BJP-led NDA continues to be in power in 20 states and union territories (out of the total 31 which have a legislature). The BJP has a CM in 13 states. The INC comes the closest with being in power in 5 states, a CM in three states and being an alliance partner in two.

The dominance of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India and the emergence of the fourth party system can be attributed to several key factors such as:

- **Strong Leadership:** Rahul Verma claims that the BJP's dominance has been cemented by Narendra Modi's magnetic leadership and personal appeal, citing statistics from the Firstpost-IPSOS National Trust Survey conducted in March 2019. His push on aspirational India and his image as an incorruptible and resolute leader were key factors in the BJP's appeal.

- **Social Engineering:** Pradeep Chhibber and Rahul Verma in The Rise of the Second Dominant Party System in India: BJP's New Social Coalition in 2019 credited the party's success to social engineering. On 2019 election results, he said that the success of the BJP can be attributed to its ability to build a broad social coalition that cuts across caste, religion, and class lines.

- **Bold Decisions:** Bold political and policy moves, such as the Demonetisation, GST, abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir and the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) also helped the party.

- **Welfare Policies:** The focus on economic development and welfare schemes has helped to garner support from economically weaker sections, further expanding its social base according to Pradeep Chhibber. Through a combination of strategic policies and targeted messaging, the BJP has managed to cultivate a diverse coalition of beneficiaries or individuals who have directly benefited from government schemes.

- **Fragmentation of Opposition:** The parties in opposition struggled with internal conflicts, which significantly weakened its political position.

These issues have made it difficult for the opposition to present a unified and compelling alternative to the BJP, contributing to the latter's dominance in Indian politics.

3.6 CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIA'S PARTY SYSTEM

Based on the four phases, one can summarise that the party system in India exhibits several distinct characteristics such as:

• **Multi-party System:** India has a multi-party system, meaning there are numerous political parties competing for power at various levels of government, from the national to the local level.

• **Dominance of Major Parties:** While India has a multitude of political parties, the landscape has historically been dominated by a few major parties, the BJP and the INC.

• **Leader Centric Parties:** The fortunes of political parties are closely intertwined with the charisma, popularity, and leadership style of prominent leaders. Leaders command significant influence over party strategies, decision-making processes, coalitions and electoral campaigns. Moreover, the dominance of strong leaders at times overshadows party ideologies or organisational structures, shaping the direction of politics.

• **Regionalism:** Regional parties play a significant role in Indian politics, often focusing on issues specific to states or regions. These parties can hold considerable influence in their respective areas and sometimes form crucial alliances at the national level.

• **Coalition Politics:** Due to the multi-party nature of Indian politics, coalition governments are common, especially at the national level. Political parties often form alliances and coalitions to gain a majority and form a government, leading to a scenario where governance involves negotiation and compromise among coalition partners.

• **Diversity of Ideologies:** Indian political parties represent a wide spectrum of ideologies, ranging from left-wing socialist to right-wing nationalist,

as well as regional and caste-based interests. This ideological diversity reflects the complexity of India's socio-political landscape.

- **Dynastic Politics:** In some parties, the political leadership often passes through family lineages, leading to a phenomenon known as dynastic politics. This can influence party dynamics and candidate selection processes.

- **Role of Money and Muscle Power:** Despite legal restrictions, the influence of money and muscle power remains a significant aspect of Indian politics, with parties often relying on financial resources and political muscle to win elections and maintain power.

- **Role of Identity:** Political parties often mobilise voters along the lines of caste, religion, ethnicity, or regional affiliations. Identity-based appeals play a significant role in garnering support during elections, with parties crafting their agendas and messaging to resonate with specific identity groups.

It is noteworthy that in India, political parties not only shape the public discourse but are also influenced by the populace, which contributes to the internal dynamics and ideological evolution of the party.

Table 3.1 List of Indian Prime Ministers and Their Tenures

Name	Tenure	Party
Shri Jawaharlal Nehru	August 15, 1947 – May 27, 1964	Indian National Congress (INC)
Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda	May 27, 1964 – June 9, 1964	Indian National Congress (INC)
Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri	June 9, 1964 – January 11, 1966	Indian National Congress (INC)
Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda	January 11, 1966 – January 24, 1966	Indian National Congress (INC)
Mrs. Indira Gandhi	January 24, 1966 – March 24, 1977	Indian National Congress (INC)
Shri Morarji Desai	March 24, 1977 – July 28, 1979	Janata Party
Shri Charan Singh	July 28, 1979 – January 14, 1980	Janata Party

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Mrs. Indira Gandhi	January 14, 1980 – October 31, 1984	Indian National Congress (INC)
Shri Rajiv Gandhi	October 31, 1984 – December 2, 1989	Indian National Congress (INC)
Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh	December 2, 1989 – November 10, 1990	Janata Dal
Shri Chandra Shekhar	November 10, 1990 – June 21, 1991	Janata Dal (S)
Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao	June 21, 1991 – May 16, 1996	Indian National Congress (INC)
Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee	May 16, 1996 – June 1, 1996	Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP)
Shri H.D. Deve Gowda	June 1, 1996 – April 21, 1997	Janata Dal
Shri Inder Kumar Gujral	April 21, 1997 – March 19, 1998	Janata Dal
Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee	March 19, 1998 – May 22, 2004	Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP)
Dr. Manmohan Singh	May 22, 2004 – May 26, 2014	Indian National Congress (INC)
Shri Narendra Modi	May 26, 2014 – Till Present	Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP)

Conclusion

In conclusion, India's party system has changed a lot over time, showing the diverse and ever-changing nature of its democracy. The initial dominance and hegemony of the INC, the phase of multiparty-system and bi-nodal coalition parties and with BJP's rise marks a new phase in the party system. This shift highlights the dynamicity, evolution and strength of India's thriving democracy. Despite these shifts, the resilience of India's democracy lies in its ability to accommodate diverse voices and navigate through periods of transition, reflecting the vibrant and dynamic nature of Indian politics.

In-Text Questions – 2

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh, served as a predecessor to _____.

2. In 1964, the 'Principle and Policy' draft of 'Integral Humanism', which became the foundation of the Bharatiya Janata Party's political philosophy, was conceptualised by _____.

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3. The Janata Party was formed in 1977 through a merger of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh with other parties to challenge _____.

4. The Lok Sabha elections of 2014 saw the BJP winning _____ seats, marking the first time since 1984 that a single party won an outright majority on its own.

B. State True or False:

1. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh was recognised as a national party after receiving 3.06% of the vote in the first general election.

2. The Janata Party's collapse in 1979 was due to internal power struggles and accusations of 'dual membership' involving Bharatiya Jana Sangh karyakartas.

3. The BJP emerged as the single-largest party in the 1996 Lok Sabha elections, forming a government that lasted for 13 days.

4. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the Indian National Congress won more seats than the BJP.

5. The BJP-led NDA won 303 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, which was an increase from 282 seats in 2014.

3.7   SUMMARY

- The 1989 Lok Sabha elections saw the Congress party, led by Rajiv Gandhi, suffer a significant defeat, leading to the formation of India's first coalition government under the United Front and Janata Dal with Vishwanath Pratap Singh as Prime Minister.

- Internal controversies, led to the collapse of the VP Singh government, and Chandra Shekhar formed a new government with limited support.

- The 1991 elections saw the Congress-led UPA win a surprise victory, with PV Narasimha Rao focusing on economic reforms.

- The 1996 elections resulted in a hung parliament, with the BJP emerging as the largest party, but Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government fell within 13

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days, leading to the United Front government under HD Deve Gowda.

- The 1999 elections saw the NDA, led by BJP, win with support from 24 parties, marking the first non-Congress government to complete a full term.

- The era from 1989 to 1998 was marked by the rise of regional parties, coalition politics, and the impact of economic reforms and media proliferation.

- The BJP established itself as a dominant political force, especially with its National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

3.8   GLOSSARY

- **Integral Humanism:** It is the political philosophy developed by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, emphasising a blend of spiritual and material progress, and serving as the foundation of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh's ideology.

- **Jana Sangh:** It is the predecessor of the BJP, founded in 1951 by Syama Prasad Mookerjee, focusing on Hindu nationalist ideals.

3.9   ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

In-Text Questions – 1

A.

1. United Front

2. 161; 13

3. 114; 302

4. P.V. Narasimha Rao

5. 218; 181

B.

1. True

2. True

3. False

4. True

5. False

In-Text Questions – 2

A.

1. Bharatiya Janata Party

2. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya

3. Indira Gandhi

4. 282

B.

1. True

2. True

3. False

4. False

5. True

3.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on the Coalition Era of Indian politics.

2. What are the limitations on the government due to coalition politics?

3. What is the bi-polar or the bi-nodal system? Explain in brief.

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4. Write a note on the Emergence and Domination of Bharatiya Janata Party.

5. What are the characteristics of India's Party System?

6. How did the rise of regional parties influence the political landscape in India during the 1990s?

3.11 REFERENCES/SUGGESTED READINGS

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Unit II: Elections and Electoral Processes

Lesson 4:   Electoral Process, Voting Behaviour, Election Commission and Electoral Reforms

LESSON 4
ELECTORAL PROCESS, VOTING BEHAVIOUR, ELECTION COMMISSION AND ELECTORAL REFORMS

Devendra Dilip Pai

Assistant Professor,
School of Open Learning,
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

• Discuss the fundamental principles and procedures involved in electoral processes

- Analyse the role of the Election Commission of India

- Examine the need for electoral reforms

- Explain how each social determinant influences voter preferences and behaviours in the context of Indian elections

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Elections stand as the bedrock of India's vibrant democracy, serving as the cornerstone of citizen participation and governance. With its rich tapestry of diversity, India embraces a robust electoral framework that ensures the voices of its diverse populace are heard. From the monumental first general elections in 1951-52 to the present-day electoral landscape, India's electoral journey has been marked by a commitment to democratic principles, enshrined in its constitution. The electoral processes in India, overseen by the independent Election Commission of India, reflect a dedication to fairness, transparency, and inclusivity, enabling millions of citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote and shape the nation's destiny. Through a combination of territorial representation and proportional representation methods, India's electoral system ensures that the aspirations of its people are translated into effective governance, fostering a dynamic and participatory democracy unmatched in scale and diversity.

4.3 ELECTIONS IN INDIA

Elections in India are conducted through a multi-tiered process that involves various stakeholders. The various stakeholders are:

- **Election Commission of India (ECI):** The Election Commission of India is the apex body responsible for overseeing the conduct of elections in the country. The ECI is an independent constitutional authority entrusted

with the task of ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections at all levels. It formulates policies, supervises the electoral machinery, and enforces the Model Code of Conduct to ensure a level playing field for all political parties and candidates.

- **Voters:** Voters are the backbone of the electoral process in India. Eligible citizens aged 18 and above have the right to vote in elections. Voters participate in the electoral process by casting their ballots to elect representatives at various levels of government, including the Lok Sabha, state legislative assemblies, and local bodies.

- **Political Parties:** Political parties play a crucial role in the electoral process by nominating candidates to contest elections. They campaign extensively to mobilise voters, articulate their policies and agendas, and seek public support for their candidates.

- **Candidates:** Candidates are individuals fielded by political parties or contesting independently to represent their constituencies. Candidates engage in campaigning activities, interact with voters, and present their vision and plans for governance if elected.

- **Election Officials:** Election officials are responsible for the administrative conduct of elections at various levels. They include Returning Officers, Presiding Officers, Polling Officers, and other personnel involved in the management of polling booths, voter registration, ballot counting, and result declaration.

- **Security Forces:** Security forces, including central and state police forces, are deployed to ensure the maintenance of law and order during elections. They play a crucial role in providing security at polling stations, preventing electoral malpractices, and ensuring the safety of voters and election officials.

- **Media and Civil Society:** Media organisations and civil society groups play a vital role in disseminating information about the electoral process,

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raising awareness among voters, and monitoring the conduct of elections. They provide platforms for political discourse, analysis of election-related issues, and scrutiny of candidates and parties.

These stakeholders collectively contribute to the conduct of elections in India, ensuring that the democratic process remains robust, inclusive, and reflective of the will of the people.

4.4 TYPES OF ELECTIONS

India, the world's largest democracy, conducts a variety of elections to ensure the representation of its diverse populace at different levels of government. These elections are pivotal in shaping the country's political landscape and governance structure. Understanding the types of elections in India is essential for grasping the complexity and breadth of its democratic processes.

India's electoral framework encompasses elections to the central government, state governments, and local bodies. The primary types of elections are the General Elections, State Assembly Elections, and Local Body Elections. Additionally, there are specific elections for the President and Vice President of India, as well as the elections to the Rajya Sabha (Council of States), the upper house of the Parliament.

1. **General Elections (Lok Sabha Elections):** Held every five years, these elections determine the composition of the Lok Sabha, the lower house of Parliament. Members of Parliament (MPs) are elected from single-member constituencies through a first-past-the-post system. These elections are organised and managed by the Election Commission of India.

   (Two-member or three-member constituencies in India in the first two general elections were done away with in 1961 paving way for a system with reserved seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.)

2. **State Assembly Elections:** Conducted every five years to elect representatives to the Vidhan Sabha (State Legislative Assembly). Each state is divided into constituencies, with representatives elected using the first-past-the-post system.

3. **Rajya Sabha Elections:** Members of the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of Parliament, are elected by the elected members of State Legislative Assemblies and Electoral colleges of Union territories, through a proportional representation system using a single transferable vote.

4. **Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections:** The President and Vice President of India are elected indirectly. The President is elected by an electoral college consisting of MPs and Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) of states and Union territories. The Vice President is elected by an electoral college comprising members of both houses of Parliament.

5. **Local Body Elections:** These include elections to Municipalities (Urban Local Bodies) and Panchayats (Rural Local Bodies). They are crucial for grassroots governance and local self-administration. Conducted at varying intervals, these elections ensure public participation in local development and administration.

6. **Bye-Elections:** Held to fill vacancies that arise between general elections due to the resignation or death of a Member of Parliament or a State Assembly.

In the above, the first four types of election are organised and managed by the Election Commission of India while the fifth type is organised and managed State Election Commissions. Depending on the type of bye elections, these elections are organised and managed either by the Central Election Commission or by the State Election Commissions.

These varied elections are fundamental to the functioning of India's democratic system, ensuring representation at multiple levels and enabling citizens to have a say in their governance. Through these electoral processes,

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India maintains its commitment to democratic principles, allowing for a dynamic and participatory political environment.

4.5 ELECTORAL PROCESS

Understanding the electoral process is fundamental for comprehending how democratic governance functions in India.

1. Voter Registration

- **Eligibility:** Every Indian citizen aged 18 and above is eligible to vote in elections. The right to vote is a fundamental aspect of democratic participation and citizenship.

- **Registration Process:** To vote, eligible citizens must register themselves in the electoral rolls or the voters list. This involves filling out a voter registration form, providing necessary identification and proof of residence, and submitting it to the local Electoral Registration Office (ERO) or fill up the online form on the ECI portal https://voters.eci.gov.in/ or Voter helpline app available on mobile phones. The registration process can also be completed online through the National Voters' Services Portal. The QR code for the Voter helpline app, available in both the versions, android and iOS has been given below:

Android   iOS

- **Voters List:** Citizens can check whether their names have been included in the list through the mobile phone app or the website.

2. Polling Booths

- **Setup:** On the day of the election, polling booths are set up across the country to facilitate voting. Each constituency has multiple polling booths to ensure that voters can conveniently access a nearby location to cast their votes.

- **Facilities:** Polling booths are equipped with necessary facilities to ensure a smooth voting process. This includes adequate lighting, voting compartments to ensure privacy, and facilities for the elderly and divyang voters.

- **Polling Officers:** A team of polling officers is assigned to each booth to manage the voting process, verify voter identities, and ensure compliance with election laws and procedures. Majority of the staff for polling duty is not a regular staff of ECI but drawn from various governmental agencies, who are trained and deputed for the election work.

- **Voting Process**: Voters visit their designated polling booths, where their names are checked against the electoral rolls. They are then directed to the voting compartment to cast their votes in privacy.

3. Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)

- **What are EVMs:** India employs Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) for the voting process. EVMs were introduced to improve the efficiency and accuracy of voting and vote counting. In 1982, the 70-Paravur Assembly Constituency in Kerala used electronic voting machines for the first time.

- **How EVMs Work:** Each EVM has a list of candidates and their symbols. Voters cast their vote by pressing the button next to the symbol of their preferred candidate. This action registers their vote electronically.

- **Advantages:** EVMs are user-friendly and reduce the chances of invalid or fraudulent votes. They also expedite the counting process and minimise human errors associated with manual vote counting.

• **Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT):** To enhance transparency, EVMs are often used in conjunction with VVPAT systems, which provide a paper receipt to the voter as confirmation of their vote. Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) is an independent system attached to Electronic Voting Machines that allows voters to confirm that their votes were cast correctly.

• **How VVPATs Work:** When a vote is cast, a slip is printed with the candidate's serial number, name, and symbol and is visible through a transparent window for 7 seconds. The printed slip is then automatically cut and placed in the VVPAT's sealed drop box.

• **Advantages:** VVPAT (Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail) provides the voters with the verification of their votes, though they have been cast, as intended and this system can work as an extra layer of protection from the manipulation or destruction of the votes.

4. Counting of Votes

• **Post-Poll Process:** After the polling concludes, EVMs are sealed and transported to secure counting centers. The counting of votes usually begins under tight security and surveillance.

• **Counting Procedure:** Votes are counted electronically, which ensures a quick and accurate tally. Each EVM's data is retrieved, and the total votes for each candidate are tabulated.

• **Declaration of Results:** The candidate with the highest number of votes in a constituency is declared the winner. The results are announced publicly, and the ECI certifies the election outcomes.

• **Transparency and Security:** The entire counting process is conducted transparently, with representatives from political parties, candidates, and observers monitoring the process to ensure its integrity.

The electoral process not only facilitates the expression of the people's will but also ensures that the transition of power is conducted smoothly and transparently, reinforcing the core values of democracy.

In-Text Questions – 1

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. The _____ is the apex body responsible for overseeing the conduct of elections in India.

2. Members of the Rajya Sabha are elected through a _____ representation system using a single transferable vote.

3. Voters must register themselves in the _____ or the voters list to be eligible to vote in elections.

4. The President and Vice President of India are elected indirectly by an electoral college consisting of _____ and Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs).

5. Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were first used in _____ Assembly Constituency in Kerala.

B. State True or False:

1. Voters must be at least 21 years old to be eligible to vote in elections in India.

2. The counting of votes in India is conducted manually without the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

3. The Election Commission of India is responsible for ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections at all levels of government.

4. The Vice President of India is elected by an electoral college comprising members of both houses of Parliament.

5. Local Body Elections are conducted every five years to elect representatives to the Vidhan Sabha.

4.6 ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

The Election Commission of India (ECI) stands as a beacon of impartiality, integrity, and efficiency in the world's largest democracy. Established under the provisions of the Indian Constitution, the ECI serves as a unique and independent constitutional body entrusted with the monumental task of conducting free, fair, and transparent elections across the vast expanse of the Indian subcontinent. What sets the Election Commission apart is its unwavering commitment to upholding the democratic ethos and ensuring the sanctity of the electoral process, making it a true guardian of democracy in India.

One of the most striking aspects of the Election Commission's uniqueness lies in its autonomy and independence from political interference. Unlike electoral bodies in many other countries, the ECI operates as a constitutional authority free from executive control, allowing it to discharge its duties with impartiality and integrity. This independence empowers the Election Commission to make decisions and implement policies in the best interests of the democratic process, safeguarding the rights of voters and ensuring a level playing field for all political parties and candidates.

Moreover, the Election Commission's role extends beyond the mere administration of elections; it serves as a custodian of electoral democracy, tirelessly striving to enhance the fairness, transparency, and inclusivity of the electoral process. Through innovative measures such as the introduction of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs), and strict enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, the ECI has revolutionised India's electoral landscape, modernising its electoral infrastructure and instilling confidence in the electoral process among stakeholders.

Furthermore, the Election Commission's commitment to inclusivity and voter participation is evident in its efforts to ensure the effective implementation of electoral reforms aimed at enhancing voter registration, accessibility, and inclusivity. By pioneering initiatives such as voter education programmes,

the ECI has played a pivotal role in strengthening the foundations of India's democracy and fostering a culture of civic engagement and political awareness among its citizens.

In the U.S., elections are managed at the state and local levels, with each state having its own set of rules and procedures. This decentralised approach can result in significant variations in how elections are conducted, including differences in voter registration processes, ballot designs, voting technologies, and vote counting methods. These inconsistencies can cause confusion among voters and complicate efforts to ensure the integrity of the electoral process.

For example, US Commission on Civil Rights in its status report on Probe of Election Practices in Florida during the 2000 Presidential Elections observed that the lack of standardised procedures led to the infamous Florida recount, highlighting the problems of differing voting technologies and ballot designs. Similarly, during the 2020 election, the diverse methodologies employed by various states led to widespread debates and legal challenges over the legitimacy of the results.

In contrast, the Election Commission of India ensures uniformity in the electoral process by issuing guidelines and conducting elections across all states and Union territories. This centralisation helps mitigate the risks of discrepancies and enhances the public's trust in the electoral system, ensuring that the democratic process is fair and credible throughout the country.

In essence, the Election Commission of India stands as a unique and exemplary institution, embodying the spirit of democracy and the principles of transparency, impartiality, and accountability. Through its steadfast dedication to upholding the democratic process and safeguarding the rights of citizens, the ECI continues to inspire trust and confidence in India's electoral democracy, serving as a shining example for electoral bodies worldwide.

Model Code of Conduct (MCC) by the Election Commission of India (ECI)

The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a crucial set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections.

The MCC is aimed at regulating the behaviour of political parties and candidates during elections, maintaining the integrity of the electoral process, and ensuring a level playing field for all contestants.

The MCC is designed to maintain the decorum and propriety of the electoral process. It comes into effect from the date the election schedule is announced by the ECI and remains in force until the election process is completed.

Some key aspects of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) are:

- **General Conduct:** Political parties and candidates are required to avoid activities that could cause tension between different communities. Inflammatory language is prohibited.

- **Meetings:** Parties and candidates must inform local authorities of the time and place of meetings and rallies to enable them to make necessary arrangements for maintaining peace and order. Loudspeakers and other such devices are to be used without causing disturbance to the public, adhering to prescribed decibel levels and timings.

- **Rallies and Processions:** The MCC regulates the conduct of rallies and processions to ensure that they do not hinder public life and traffic. Prior permission must be obtained from the local authorities, and routes should be planned to minimise inconvenience to the public.

- **Polling Day Conduct:** Candidates and parties are prohibited from canvassing or distributing liquor beginning from 48 hours till the end of polling on voting day.

- **Polling Booths**: Political parties must not set up booths within 200 meters of polling stations to assist voters. Only one vehicle per candidate is allowed to be parked at each polling station, and voters are to be transported without any coercion or influence.

- **Party in Power:** The MCC imposes special restrictions on the party in power to prevent misuse of official position. Ministers and other authorities must not use official machinery or personnel for electioneering work. Announcement of new projects, policy decisions,

or financial grants likely to influence the voters in favour of the ruling party is prohibited.

- **Advertising, Expenditure and Media:** The ECI monitors all political advertisement and also keeps a track on the expenditure of both individual candidates as well as the expenditure of the political parties.

- **Ban on Exit Polls:** The Election Commission of India (ECI) has implemented a ban on exit polls during elections to ensure the integrity and fairness of the electoral process. This prohibition aims to prevent the undue influence of exit poll results on voters and the election outcome. Several times political parties wrongly influence the exit poll numbers to favour them. Early predictions may sway undecided voters or demoralise supporters of certain candidates or parties.

- **Violations and Penalties:** The ECI has the authority to take action against parties or candidates violating the MCC. The ECI can also order the transfer of officials or restrict the deployment of government resources to ensure compliance with the MCC.

The Model Code of Conduct is instrumental in maintaining the sanctity of the electoral process in India. By enforcing these guidelines, the ECI strives to ensure that elections are conducted in a manner that is just, equitable, and transparent, thereby reinforcing the democratic foundations of the country.

4.7   ELECTORAL REFORMS IN INDIA

Electoral reforms play a pivotal role in enhancing the integrity, fairness, and inclusivity of the electoral process in India. Over the years, successive governments and the Election Commission of India (ECI) have undertaken significant reforms aimed at modernising India's electoral framework and addressing emerging challenges.

- **Lowering the Voting Age:** The 61st Amendment Act to the Constitution reduced the minimum voting age from 21 to 18 years.

- **Contesting Constituencies:** A candidate cannot contest from more than two constituencies. Previously, there was no such restriction. In 1991, Devi Lal, Haryana's deputy chief minister, contested for three Lok Sabha seats: Sikar, Rohtak, and Ferozepur, as well as the Ghirai assembly seat. (Eventually he lost from all four seats)

- **Anti-Defection Law:** Members of Parliament (MPs) or State Legislatures (MLAs) can be disqualified if they voluntarily give up their party membership or disobey their party's directives on a vote. If a faction within a political party wants to break away, the law allows it under specific conditions. For a split or a merger of the party to be considered legitimate and not subject to anti-defection penalties, at least two-thirds of the elected members of that party must support the split or the merger. This high threshold ensures that splits are substantial and representative of a significant portion of the party, rather than being driven by a small, possibly opportunistic group.

- **EPIC or Voters ID:** Nation-wise Electors Photo Identity Cards (EPIC) were introduced in 1993. This helped officials identify the voters ensuring there was no duplication of vote.

- **Introduction of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs):** Introduction of EVMs revolutionised the voting process, replacing traditional paper ballots with secure electronic voting machines. EVMs have reduced the time taken for counting votes, minimised electoral fraud, and increased the accuracy of results.

- **Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs):** Implementation of VVPATs ensures transparency and integrity in the voting process by providing voters with a physical paper trail of their vote which id destroyed on the spot. VVPATs enable voters to verify that their vote has been cast correctly, enhancing confidence in the electoral process.

- **Campaign Finance Reforms:** Implementation of campaign finance reforms aimed at curbing the influence of money in elections, introduction of expenditure limits for candidates and political parties, mandatory

disclosure of campaign finances, and stricter enforcement of financial regulations. The upper limit for campaign finance spending for Lok Sabha elections is 95 lakhs and 75 lakhs respectively while for Vidhan Sabha 40 lakhs and 25 lakhs respectively.

- **Candidates Declaration:** Declaring of criminal antecedents, assets, etc. by the candidates along with spouse (and minor children) is required and declaring false information in the affidavit is now an electoral offence punishable with imprisonment up to 6 months or fine or both.

- **Introduction of NOTA (None of the Above):** Introduction of NOTA option on ballot papers and EVMs, allowing voters to express their dissatisfaction with the candidates contesting in their constituency. NOTA empowers voters to reject all candidates if they find them unsuitable, promoting accountability among political parties and candidates.

- **Vote from Home:** A noteworthy new electoral reform in India involves polling officials visiting the homes of senior citizens and People with Disabilities (PwD) to facilitate a smoother voting process. This initiative aims to make the electoral process more inclusive by addressing the mobility challenges faced by these groups. From 2024 General elections, over 14.14 lakh registered voters aged 85 plus and 13.89 lakh People with Disabilities (PwD) voters in 102 parliamentary constituencies can now vote from their homes.

- **Use of Technology for Voter Registration and Electoral Management:** Leveraging technology for voter registration, electoral roll management, and voter outreach initiatives. Introduction of online voter registration portals, mobile apps for voter education, and digital initiatives for election monitoring and management.

- **Promotion of Voter Education and Awareness:** Launch of voter education and awareness campaigns to promote informed and responsible voting behaviour. Collaboration with civil society organisations, media, and educational institutions to enhance voter literacy and civic engagement.

- **Electoral Bonds:** The introduction of electoral bonds is a reform aimed at increasing transparency in political funding by allowing individuals and organisations to donate to political parties through a banking instrument. These bonds ensured that donations are made through legal and accountable channels, reducing the reliance on unaccounted cash contributions. Electoral bonds were introduced in 2017 and eventually struck down by the Supreme Court in February 2024.

In conclusion, electoral reforms in India are aimed at modernising the electoral framework, promoting transparency and integrity, and ensuring greater participation and representation in the democratic process. While significant progress has been made, continuous efforts and vigilance are essential to address evolving challenges and uphold the principles of democratic governance.

Election reforms are an ongoing process aimed at enhancing the fairness, transparency, and efficiency of the electoral system. Despite significant advancements, there are still areas needing improvement, such as campaign finance transparency, online voting, and better provisions Indian citizens who are not residing in their home states and those who are abroad.

Some of the proposed reforms are:

- **Transparency in Campaign Funding and Electoral Bonds:** Introduce stricter regulations to ensure transparency in campaign funding and political donations. Implement measures to disclose the identity of donors contributing through electoral bonds, thereby enhancing accountability and reducing the potential for anonymous funding.

- **Online Voting:** Explore the feasibility of introducing online voting mechanisms to facilitate greater participation, especially among urban populations and overseas Indian citizens. Develop robust cybersecurity measures to safeguard against potential threats to the integrity and security of online voting systems.

- **Voting in Foreign Countries/Embassies:** Facilitate voting for Indian citizens residing abroad by setting up polling stations in foreign countries or embassies and consulates. Streamline the absentee voting process to enable eligible overseas voters to cast their ballots conveniently and securely.

- **Easy Transfer of Constituency:** Introduce provisions for voters to easily transfer their voting constituency in case of relocation or change of residence. Simplify the process of updating voter registration details to ensure that citizens can exercise their franchise without logistical barriers.

- **Right to Recall:** Consider the implementation of the right to recall provisions, allowing constituents to recall elected representatives who fail to fulfil their electoral promises or meet performance benchmarks. Establish clear guidelines and thresholds for initiating and conducting recall elections to prevent misuse and ensure fairness.

- **Enhanced Voter Education and Awareness:** Launch comprehensive voter education campaigns to raise awareness about electoral processes, voting rights, and the importance of civic engagement. Collaborate with educational institutions, civil society organisations, and media platforms to disseminate accurate information and encourage informed participation.

- **Decriminalisation of Politics:** Enact legislation to disqualify candidates with criminal records from contesting elections, thereby promoting integrity and accountability in public office. Strengthen enforcement mechanisms to expedite the disposal of pending criminal cases against elected representatives.

- **Reforms in Election Commission Powers:** Enhance the Election Commission's powers and autonomy to ensure more effective oversight of the electoral process and enforcement of electoral laws. Grant the

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Election Commission authority to regulate political advertising, monitor campaign spending, and penalise violations of electoral guidelines.

• **Promotion of Youth and Women's Participation:** Implement measures to encourage greater representation of youth and women in electoral politics, including quotas and incentives for political parties to field younger and female candidates. Foster a conducive environment for youth and women to actively participate in political leadership and decision-making processes.

These proposed reforms aim to address key challenges and enhance the integrity, inclusivity, and effectiveness of India's electoral system, fostering a stronger democratic culture and ensuring that the voices and choices of citizens are truly heard and respected.

In-Text Questions – 2

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. The Election Commission of India (ECI) operates as a _____ authority free from executive control.

2. The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) comes into effect from the date the _____ is announced by the ECI.

3. The introduction of _____ Voting Machines (EVMs) revolutionised the voting process in India by replacing traditional paper ballots.

4. The 61st Amendment Act to the Constitution reduced the minimum voting age from 21 to _____ years.

5. The implementation of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs) provides voters with a _____ paper trail of their vote**.**

B. State True or False:

1. The Election Commission of India (ECI) is influenced by the executive branch of the government.

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2. The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) regulates the behaviour of political parties and candidates during elections.

3. The Election Commission of India ensures uniformity in the electoral process across all states and Union territories.

4. The introduction of NOTA (None of the Above) allows voters to reject all candidates if they find them unsuitable.

5. The Supreme Court struck down the electoral bonds reform in February 2024.

4.8 SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR

Voting behaviour is shaped by various social factors that influence how people make their choices in elections. Understanding these factors is important for analysing election results and how democracies function.

Some of the key social determinants of voting behaviour are highlighted below:

1. **Socioeconomic Status:** It is believed that people with higher incomes and better education are more likely to vote because they feel they have more influence and more at stake in elections.

2. **Caste:** In many countries, including India, caste and ethnic backgrounds play a big role in how people vote. Voters often support candidates from their own caste or ethnic group, believing these candidates will better represent their interests. A person might vote for a candidate who belongs to the same caste because they believe that candidate will understand and address their community's needs better.

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3. **Religion:** Religious beliefs can greatly influence voting patterns. Religious communities might vote together for candidates or parties that align with their values and interests. A person may vote for a candidate from the same religion because they believe the candidate will better understand and address the needs of their community.

4. **Gender or Sex:** Men and women may prioritise different issues when voting. For instance, women might focus more on policies related to healthcare, education, and social welfare. Women voters might support a candidate who advocates for better childcare facilities and women's safety.

5. **Age:** Age affects voting preferences. Younger voters often care more about issues like jobs and education, while older voters might be more concerned with healthcare and pensions. A young voter might be interested in a candidate's stance on education, while an older voter might focus on the candidate's plans for healthcare for the elderly.

6. **Region and Locality:** Where people live influences their voting behaviour. Rural and urban voters often have different concerns. Local issues and how well local governments perform can also impact voting decisions. Urban voters might be concerned with public transportation and pollution, while rural voters might prioritise agricultural policies and rural development.

7. **Political Socialisation:** Political views and party loyalties are often passed down from family members. If a family has always supported a particular political party or an ideology, the younger members might continue to support that party or ideology.

8. **Peer Groups and Social Networks:** Friends, co-workers, and community discussions can influence voting choices. A person might be persuaded to vote for a particular candidate because their friends and colleagues are enthusiastic about that candidate.

9. **Media and Information:** Exposure to news and political information through TV, newspapers, and social media shapes how people see political issues and candidates. Media can highlight important issues, influencing public opinion. A voter might decide to support a candidate after seeing positive coverage of their campaign on TV or reading about their policies online.

10. **Party or Ideological Affiliation:** Long-term loyalty to a political party can guide voting behaviour. Strong party supporters are likely to always vote for their party's candidates, no matter the specific issues or candidates in an election. A person who has always supported a particular political party might vote for that party's candidate without considering the specific details of their platform.

11. **Issue-based Support:** Voters are influenced by how important certain issues are during an election. Issues like the climate change, economy, national security, corruption, and social justice can have a big impact on voting decisions. During an economic downturn, voters might prioritise candidates who have strong economic policies to boost growth and create jobs.

12. **Charismatic Leadership:** The personal appeal and charisma of a leader can significantly influence voting behaviour. Charismatic leaders often inspire strong loyalty and support, sometimes transcending specific policies or party affiliations. A charismatic leader might attract voters through their compelling speeches, dynamic personality, and ability to connect with people, leading them to vote based on the leader's personal appeal rather than the party's platform.

Understanding these factors helps us see how different groups in society participate in elections and make their voting decisions. It also helps political parties and candidates plan their campaigns to address the concerns and preferences of different voter groups effectively.

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Moreover, the regular conduct of elections at various levels—national, state, and local—ensures continuous public engagement in the democratic process, reflecting the vibrant and participatory nature of Indian democracy.

Conclusion

This lesson has provided a comprehensive overview of elections and the electoral processes in India, equipping students with a fundamental understanding of the principles and procedures that underpin the democratic framework. By exploring the intricacies of voter registration, the functioning of polling booths, and the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), students can now articulate the critical steps involved in conducting elections in the world's largest democracy.

The role of the Election Commission of India (ECI) has been highlighted as pivotal in ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections. Through its regulatory and oversight functions, the ECI upholds the integrity of the electoral process, addressing challenges and implementing measures to improve efficiency and public trust.

Reforms such as the Anti-Defection Law, the introduction of electoral bonds for transparent political funding, and the potential increase in the number of Election Commissioners reflect the dynamic nature of India's democracy. These reforms aim to mitigate issues such as political instability, corruption, and administrative inefficiencies, ensuring that the electoral process remains inclusive and equitable.

The system's ability to conduct peaceful transitions of power is a testament to its stability and effectiveness. Additionally, the extensive voter outreach and education programs help in increasing voter awareness and participation, which is essential in a diverse and populous country like India. The availability of voter registration mechanisms and the implementation of measures to make voting accessible for senior citizens and persons with disabilities further enhance the inclusiveness of the electoral process.

In-Text Questions – 3

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. Voting behaviour can be influenced by factors such as socioeconomic status, _____, and media exposure.

2. A charismatic leader can significantly influence voting behaviour through their _____ appeal and dynamic personality.

B. State True or False:

1. Media exposure has no impact on shaping a voter's decision in elections.

2. Vote bank politics involves creating loyal voting blocs based on social identities.

3. Charismatic leadership does not play a role in influencing voting behaviour.

4.9 SUMMARY

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) oversees elections, ensuring they are free, fair, and transparent. It formulates policies, supervises electoral processes, and enforces the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

- Voters, aged 18 and above, participate by casting ballots for various levels of government.

- Political parties nominate candidates, campaign, and seek voter support.

- Candidates, whether from political parties or independent, campaign and present their platforms.

- Election officials manage administrative tasks at polling stations, including voter registration and ballot counting.

- Security forces maintain order during elections and ensure voter and official safety.

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- Media and civil society raise awareness, monitor elections, and provide platforms for political discourse.

- Types of elections include General Elections (Lok Sabha), State Assembly Elections, Local Body Elections, Rajya Sabha Elections, Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections, and Bye-Elections.

- The electoral process includes voter registration, setup of polling booths, use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT), and vote counting.

- The ECI is independent and centralises election management to ensure uniformity and fairness.

- The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) regulates election conduct, including campaign activities, rallies, and polling day behaviour to maintain electoral integrity.

- Electoral reforms have included lowering the voting age, introducing EVMs and VVPATs, and implementing measures like NOTA and campaign finance reforms. Proposed reforms focus on transparency, online voting, and improved voter participation.

- Elections are central to democracy, allowing citizens to choose representatives and influence policies.

- In India, the electoral process is complex, reflecting its diversity and large population.

- Voting behaviour is influenced by socioeconomic status, caste, religion, gender, age, region, political socialisation, media, party affiliation, issue-based support, and charismatic leadership.

4.10 GLOSSARY

- **Election Commission of India (ECI):** It is the independent body that is responsible for overseeing and managing elections in India.

- **Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT):** It is a system that provides a paper receipt to voters to verify their vote, ensuring transparency.

- **Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs):** These machines are used to record and count votes electronically.

- **Model Code of Conduct (MCC):** These guidelines are issued by the ECI to regulate the behaviour of political parties and candidates during elections.

- **NOTA (None of the Above):** It is an option on the ballot allowing voters to reject all candidates if they find them unsuitable.

- **Rajya Sabha:** It is the upper house of the Indian Parliament wherein members are elected by State Legislative Assemblies

- **Lok Sabha:** It is the lower house of the Indian Parliament wherein members are elected directly by the people through general elections.

- **Charismatic Leadership:** It is the influence of a leader's personal appeal on voting behaviour.

4.11 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

In-Text Questions – 1

A.

1. Election Commission of India (ECI)

2. Proportional

3. Electoral rolls

4. MPs

5. Paravur

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B.

    1. False

    2. False

    3. True

    4. True

    5. False

In-Text Questions – 2

A.

    1. Constitutional

    2. Election schedule

    3. Electronic

    4. 18

    5. Physical

B.

    1. False

    2. True

    3. True

    4. True

    5. True

In-Text Questions – 3

A.

    1. Caste

    2. Personal

B.

1. False

2. True

3. False

4.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Which are the various types of elections which take place in India?

2. Write a note on the electoral process.

3. What is the role of the Election Commission of India?

4. Which are the new electoral reforms needed?

5. What is the role of the Election Commission of India (ECI) in the electoral process?

6. How do Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) enhance the voting process in India?

7. What are the key components of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and their purpose?

8. What are the determinants of voting behaviour in India?

9. Discuss the process of elections in India.

10. Explain in brief the evolution of electoral reforms.

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Unit III: Religion and Politics

Lesson 5:   Debates on Secularism and Communalism

LESSON 5
DEBATES ON SECULARISM AND COMMUNALISM

Devendra Dilip Pai
Assistant Professor,
School of Open Learning,
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

• Understand the role of religion and its impact on politics in India

• Analyse how religion intersects and influences political mobilisation and behaviour in India

• Discuss the secularism-communalism debate

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5.2 INTRODUCTION

Religion has always played a significant role in the social and political fabric of India. With its diverse religious landscape, India is home to major world religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism. This diversity influences not just the cultural and social domains but also the political dynamics of the country.

Religion has always been a cornerstone of Indian society. India is a land of immense religious diversity, housing some of the world's oldest and most influential religions. According to the 2011 census, Hinduism, which accounts for nearly 79.8% of the population, is not just a faith but a way of life with deep philosophical and cultural roots. Islam, with around 14.2% of the population, has a history in India, dating back to the early medieval period and profoundly influencing Indian culture, architecture, and cuisine. Christianity, representing about 2.3% of the population, arrived in India with St. Thomas, the Apostle around 52 CE and has since grown, particularly in states like Kerala and Goa. Sikhism, born in the Punjab region in the 15th century, emphasises the teachings of Guru Nanak and his successors and contributes significantly to India's cultural and political landscape. Buddhism and Jainism, both originating in India, have shaped the country's philosophical traditions and ethical frameworks, though they now constitute smaller proportions of the population.

This religious diversity manifests in India's myriad festivals, rituals, and traditions, which are integral to the country's cultural identity. Festivals like Diwali, Eid, Christmas, and Baisakhi are celebrated with fervour and bring together people from various backgrounds, fostering a sense of unity amidst diversity. Religious practices, pilgrimages, and community activities also play a vital role in the daily lives of Indians, influencing their social interactions and community bonds.

5.3 COMMUNALISM IN BRITISH INDIA

Communalism is a political ideology advocating that followers of a specific religion prioritise political allegiance to their own religious community. Mere affiliation with the social, cultural, and service aspects of a religious community does not constitute communalism. Communalism promotes hatred among followers of one religion towards those of other religious communities, presuming that follower of a particular religion share interests distinct from those of other religions. Essentially, communalism opposes secularism and humanism, promoting division along religious lines.

Communalism in India traces its origins to the emergence of modern politics and colonial policies that exacerbated religious divisions. The partition of Bengal in 1905 by the British colonial administration, ostensibly for administrative convenience, sparked communal tensions by dividing the province along religious lines, fostering Hindu-Muslim animosity. This was followed by the introduction of separate electorates for religious communities under the Government of India Act, 1909. This policy further entrenched communal identities and sowed the seeds of religious polarisation in Indian politics.

The British government's attempts to appease different religious communities through measures like the Communal Award in 1932 only exacerbated communal tensions. The Communal Award, which provided for separate electorates for Muslims, Sikhs, Dalits, and other communities, met with strong resistance from Mahatma Gandhi and other nationalist leaders who advocated for a unified, secular India. However, the British pursued these policies to consolidate their own power and maintain control over India, exploiting communal divisions for their political interests.

Understanding the historical roots and contemporary manifestations of communalism is crucial for addressing these challenges and fostering a more inclusive and harmonious society.

5.4 HISTORY OF COMMUNALISM AND PARTITION OF INDIA

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) did not directly establish the All-India Muslim League, but his efforts laid the intellectual and social groundwork that eventually led to its formation. Sir Syed was a strong advocate for Muslim rights and political consciousness. He believed that Muslims were a distinct community with unique cultural and religious needs that required separate political representation. Sir Syed's political philosophy was grounded in cooperation with the British colonial rulers. He believed that Muslims could achieve progress and protect their interests by aligning with the British, rather than opposing them. The founders of the Muslim League, including figures like Nawab Salimullah Khan, Aga Khan III, and others, were influenced by Sir Syed's vision of a politically empowered Muslim community with a cooperative relationship with the British.

The All-India Muslim League, formed in 1906, sought to protect Muslim rights. The Two-Nation Theory was advocated by its leaders like Muhammad Iqbal and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and posited that Hindus and Muslims were distinct nations that could not coexist in a single nation-state. This led to the formal demand for a separate Muslim state, articulated in the Lahore Resolution of 1940.

The Lahore Resolution of 1940 marked a significant turning point in the struggle for Indian independence, as it formally articulated the demand for a separate Muslim state, which would later become Pakistan. Proposed by the All-India Muslim League and led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the resolution called for 'independent states' in the north-western and eastern zones of India, where Muslims were in the majority. The resolution galvanised Muslim political sentiment and intensified communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims. The years that followed saw increased communal violence, political negotiations, and a deepening divide, culminating in the British decision to partition India in 1947 to address these irreconcilable differences.

The partition of India in 1947 stands as one of the most traumatic and violent chapters in South Asian history, marked by unprecedented communal violence, mass displacement, and profound human suffering. As the British colonial rulers decided to divide India into two independent dominions, India and Pakistan, communal tensions that had been simmering for decades erupted into full-scale violence. The partition plan led to the redrawing of boundaries, along religious lines, creating Muslim-majority Pakistan (including East Pakistan, now Bangladesh) and Hindu-majority India. This redrawing of borders triggered one of the largest and bloodiest migrations in human history, as millions of Muslims migrated to their new land and a bigger number of Hindus and Sikhs were made to flee from their homes to seek refuge in India.

The violence that ensued during this mass migration was catastrophic. Entire villages were wiped out, and trains carrying refugees between the newly formed nations were attacked, resulting in the death of countless men, women, and children. Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab, Bengal, and Sindh faced horrific massacres, often perpetrated by their former neighbours. Following the invasion of tribal militias from Pakistan, there were instances of violence targeting Hindus and Sikhs in Jammu. Thousands of Hindus, along with Sikhs, were killed, and many more were forced to flee their homes to seek refuge in areas under Indian control.

The killings were brutal and indiscriminate, with mobs slaughtering entire families, and widespread looting, arson, and sexual violence. Refugee camps, hastily established to shelter the millions displaced, were overcrowded and disease-ridden. The trauma of partition left deep scars on the survivors, shaping the collective memories of the survivors and their children. Estimates suggest that about 2 lakhs of people were killed, and around 15 million were displaced, making the partition not only a political and geographical division but also a profound human tragedy.

5.5   SECULARISM IN ANCIENT INDIA

The term 'secularism' can more appropriately be conveyed by the Vedic concept of 'Dharma Nirapekshata,' i.e., indifference of state to religion. This model of secularism is adopted where Western societies totally separate state and the church that is to say, separation of state from religion.

The concept of secularism in Indian philosophy has been derived from 'Sarva Dharma Sambhava', which literally means, 'all (religious) paths lead to the same destination'. It shows equal respect to all religions.

Indian secularism is not an end in itself but a means to address religious plurality, and it sought to obtain the peaceful coexistence of different religions.

5.6   SECULARISM IN MODERN INDIA

The spirit of secularism was strengthened and enriched through the Indian freedom movement, though the British have pursued the policy of divide and rule. However, the freedom movement in India has, from the very beginning, been characterised by secular tradition and ethos.

The draft constitution, which Pandit Moti Lal Nehru had headed as the chairman of the historic Nehru Committee in 1928, had many provisions on secularism like, 'There shall be no state religion for the commonwealth of India or for any province in the commonwealth, nor shall the state, either directly or indirectly, endow any religion any preference or impose any disability on account of religious beliefs or religious status'.

There is no official state religion in India. However, different personal laws about marriage, divorce, inheritance, and alimony vary with an individual's religion.

T. Pantham (2004) explains that Indian secularism is about equal respect for all religions. The state remains neutral in religious matters, accommodating India's diverse religious practices and beliefs.

R. Bhargava (2006) discusses various perspectives on secularism and its critics in his edited volume. Bhargava highlights that Indian secularism is not a simple separation of religion and state but a nuanced approach that respects religious diversity while promoting equality. Critics of secularism argue that it sometimes leads to the marginalisation of certain religious groups and fails to address the deep-seated communal tensions in Indian society.

5.7 SECULARISM IN INDIAN CONSTITUTION

All the fundamental features of secularism have been positively included in various provisions of the constitution. The term 'Secular' was added to the preamble by the forty-second constitution Amendment Act of 1976, (India is a sovereign, socialist, secular, and democratic republic). It has reaffirmed the fact that constitutionally, India is a secular country with no state religion and that the state shall not favor or patronise any one religion but recognise and accept all religions. Few articles are mentioned here to understand the same:

- **Article 14:** It accords equality before law and equal protection of laws to all.

- **Article 15:** It goes a further distance in the philosophical perspective of extending secularism to the widest possible amplitude and prohibits such a discriminatory practice on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.

- **Article 16(1):** It also provides equal opportunity in matters of public employment to all citizens and ensures that there will be no discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, and residence.

- **Article 25:** It lays down 'Freedom of Conscience', that is all people are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and right freely to profess, practice, and propagate religion.

- **Article 26:** Every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes and manage its own affairs in matters of religion.

- **Article 27:** No person shall be compelled to pay any taxes, the proceeds of which are specifically appropriated in payment of expenses for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination.

- **Article 28:** It allows charitable institutions maintained by any particular religious community to provide religious instruction.

- **Article 29 and Article 30:** It grants cultural and educational rights to the minorities.

- **Article 51A:** It means Fundamental Duties casts a duty on every citizen to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood and to the value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.

5.8 CONTEMPORARY DEBATES

Religion intersects with politics in India in various ways, often leading to significant socio-political debates and legal controversies. Here are some elaborate examples of contemporary debates on the issue:

• Triple Talaq: Shah Bano to Shayara Bano case

The issue of Triple Talaq, or the practice of instant divorce among Muslim men by uttering 'talaq' three times, became a focal point of political and legal discourse in India. The practice was criticised for being discriminatory and oppressive towards women, as it allowed husbands to arbitrarily divorce their wives without any

legal recourse. The Shah Bano case was a significant legal battle that highlighted the clash between personal religious laws and gender justice.

Shah Bano, a Muslim woman, sought maintenance from her husband after being divorced by him through Triple Talaq. However, her claim was denied under Muslim personal law, which did not provide for long-term financial support after divorce. On April 23, 1985 the Supreme Court of India delivered a landmark judgment in favour of Shah Bano, upholding the High Court's decision and stating that Section 125 of the CrPC applies to all Indian citizens, irrespective of their religion The judgment also called for the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code as envisaged in Article 44 of the Indian Constitution, which aims to provide a consistent set of personal laws for all citizens, regardless of religion.

The Supreme Court's decision to grant maintenance to Shah Bano was met with strong opposition from conservative Muslim groups who argued that the court's intervention violated Islamic principles. Eventually, the government, under pressure from religious factions, enacted the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act in 1986, overturning the Supreme Court's ruling and restricting the rights of Muslim women in matters of maintenance. This Act limited a Muslim husband's liability to provide maintenance to his ex-wife only during the iddat period and shifted the responsibility to her relatives or the Waqf Board thereafter.

In 2017, the Supreme Court of India, in the case of Shayara Bano v. Union of India, declared Triple Talaq unconstitutional and struck it down, citing violations of women's rights and gender equality. It also directed the Parliament to take measures against it in order to stop the abuse against women. This landmark decision sparked debates about the role of religious practices in personal laws and the need for uniform civil laws to ensure gender justice.

• Uniform Civil Code

The debate over the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) has been a recurring theme in Indian politics, representing the tension between religious diversity and the quest for gender justice and national integration. It began with the Hindu Code Bill.

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The Hindu Code Bill, proposed in the 1950s, sought to reform and codify Hindu personal laws, including marriage, divorce, adoption and inheritance, with the aim of achieving gender equality and social justice. For example, it ended the long-standing accepted practice of polygamy among the Hindus. However, the bill faced fierce opposition from conservative Hindu groups and political parties, who viewed it as an infringement on religious autonomy and Hindu traditions but eventually went on to be accepted. But this move also led to the other religions getting their personal law boards in accordance with their religious scriptures.

The Uniform Civil Code seeks to replace disparate personal laws with a common set of civil laws applicable to all citizens regardless of their religious affiliations. However, the proposal has been met with resistance from various religious communities, who argue that it infringes upon their religious freedom and cultural identity. Political parties have taken contrasting positions on the issue, with some advocating for the implementation of the UCC to promote gender equality and secularism, while others oppose it on grounds of religious autonomy and communal sensitivities.

These cases illustrate the complex and often contentious intersection of religion and politics in India, shaping legal, social, and cultural landscapes and posing challenges to the ideals of secularism, social justice, and communal harmony.

Conclusion

Overall, while religion can serve as a source of unity and moral guidance for communities, its exploitation for political gain can lead to social divisions, communal tensions, and undermine the secular fabric of society. It is essential for voters to critically evaluate political rhetoric and agendas that seek to exploit religious sentiments and to hold politicians accountable for fostering inclusive and pluralistic societies.

In-Text Questions

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. India's Constitution guarantees citizens the freedom to practice and propagate _____.

2. Articles 25 to 28 of the Constitution outline citizens' rights to _____ and profess their religion.

3. The Indian judiciary has affirmed secularism as a basic feature of the Indian Constitution in landmark cases like the _____ case.

B. State True or False:

1. The Indian Constitution allows the government to favor certain religions over others.

2. Secularism in India means that the state should remain neutral in religious matters.

5.9 SUMMARY

- The political landscape of India is significantly shaped by its religious diversity, with political parties often appealing to religious sentiments for support.

- Regional parties like the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in Punjab and the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) in Kerala represent specific religious communities.

- Communalism in India has its roots in colonial policies that divided communities along religious lines, such as the partition of Bengal in 1905.

- The British policies of separate electorates and the Communal Award of 1932 exacerbated communal tensions by promoting division along religious lines.

NOTES

- The partition of India in 1947, fueled by communal tensions, led to mass displacement and violence, creating long-lasting divisions between communities.

- Contemporary issues like the Triple Talaq, and Uniform Civil Code, illustrate the ongoing intersection of religion and politics in India.

5.10 GLOSSARY

- **Communalism:** It is a political ideology that promotes allegiance to one's religious community over others, opposing secularism.

- **Triple Talaq:** It is an instant divorce practice among Muslims, declared unconstitutional by the Indian Supreme Court in 2017.

- **Uniform Civil Code (UCC):** It is a proposal for a common set of civil laws for all citizens, debated for its impact on religious freedom.

- **Secularism:** It is the principle of separating religion from the state, ensuring religious neutrality in governance.

5.11 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

A.

1. Any religion

2. Practice

3. Kesavananda Bharati

B.

1. False

2. True

5.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on religion and politics.

2. What are the origins of communalism in modern India?

3. Write a note on the history of communalism and partition of India.

4. What colonial policies contributed to the rise of communalism in India?

5. What are some contemporary debates in India that illustrate the intersection of religion and politics?

6. Explain debates on secularism and communalism in India with examples.

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Unit IV: Caste and Politics

Lesson 6:   **Caste in Politics and the Politicisation of Caste; Intersectionality of Caste, Class and Gender, Reservation and Affirmative Action Policies**

LESSON 6
CASTE IN POLITICS AND THE POLITICISATION OF CASTE; INTERSECTIONALITY OF CASTE, CLASS AND GENDER, RESERVATION AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICIES

Devendra Dilip Pai
Assistant Professor,
School of Open Learning,
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

6.1   LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

- Understand a comprehensive overview of caste in India along with its nature and significance

- Analyse the politicisation of caste

- Discuss the important concepts like affirmative action and their impact on society

6.2   INTRODUCTION

The term 'caste' refers to a system of social groups in India and regions around it that people are born into. Additionally, there is the concept of 'varna,' which categorises society into four broad classes: Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (traders), and Shudras (labourers). Most Indian languages use the word 'jati' to further elaborate and describe hereditary groups. When Portuguese travellers came to India in the 16th century, they saw this system and called it 'casta,' which means 'race' in Portuguese. Today, 'caste' is used to talk about social groups based on birth.

The caste system in India, with its origins tracing back to the Vedic period (1500–500 BCE), initially structured society into four varnas: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras, based on occupational roles. This stratification was based on attributes. Over time, these divisions became hereditary and rigid, evolving into a more complex system with the emergence of jatis (sub-castes). This stratification was further solidified during the classical and medieval periods.

British colonial rule (1757–1947) significantly impacted the caste system, formalising and reinforcing caste distinctions through policies and administrative

practices, including the caste-based census. Concurrently, social reform movements led by figures such as BR Ambedkar, and Mahatma Gandhi sought to challenge caste-based discrimination and untouchability. Post-independence, the Indian Constitution aimed to dismantle the caste system and promote social equality, introducing affirmative action policies to uplift marginalised castes.

In contemporary India, urbanisation, economic development, and globalisation are challenging traditional caste boundaries, yet caste-based identities persist. While legal measures and social activism continue to address caste-based injustices, the caste system remains a significant factor in social and political dynamics, influencing electoral outcomes and political mobilisation. Understanding the nature of castes and its historical context is crucial for comprehending the complexities and enduring impacts of caste in India.

6.3 NATURE OF CASTE

Rajni Kothari, in '*Caste in Indian Politics*,' elaborates on the role of caste as a social institution, likening it to an extended family structure that encompasses various social, economic, and political dimensions of individuals' lives. Caste acts as a cohesive force within communities, fostering a sense of belonging and identity among its members. Like an extended family, caste provides social support networks, regulates interpersonal relationships, and offers a sense of security and solidarity. Few of them are explained below:

- **Caste as an Extended Family:** Like familial structures, caste communities adhere to shared norms, values, and customs that govern social interactions and behaviour. These norms often dictate practices related to marriage, kinship, religious rituals, and occupation, shaping individuals' roles and responsibilities within the caste framework.

- **Social Control Mechanism:** Caste functions as a mechanism of social control, regulating behaviour and maintaining social order

within communities. Just as families enforce norms and rules to ensure cohesion, caste imposes social sanctions and norms to uphold hierarchical relationships and preserve the status quo.

• **Interdependence:** Caste communities often exhibit interdependence, with members relying on one another for various social, economic, and cultural needs. This interdependence mirrors the mutual support and cooperation found within family structures, reinforcing bonds of reciprocity and obligation.

• **Preserver of Culture and Traditions:** Like families, castes serve as repositories of cultural heritage, transmitting knowledge, traditions, and practices from one generation to the next. This transmission of cultural capital sustains caste identity and cohesion over time, contributing to the perpetuation of caste-based social structures.

• **Endogamy and Caste Identity:** One of the defining features of caste is its practice of endogamy, wherein individuals are expected to marry within their own caste group. This reinforces social boundaries and preserves caste purity, ensuring the continuity of lineage and status within the caste hierarchy that restricts social and economic mobility. As a result, resources, opportunities, and social networks remain confined within the caste, preventing upward mobility and preserving existing social hierarchies. Over time, this entrenched system of endogamy makes caste function similarly to class, where one's birth determines not just their social status but economic status.

By conceptualising caste as an extended family structure and examining the practice of endogamy within caste communities, Kothari sheds light on the intricate social dynamics that underpin caste-based societies in India. This perspective highlights the multifaceted nature of caste as a social institution and its profound influence on individuals' lives, relationships, and identities.

6.4 CASTE IN POLITICS, AND POLITICISATION OF CASTE

'*It is not politics that gets caste ridden, it is caste that gets politicised*'

– Rajni Kothari

In India, the caste system becomes an important part of political organisation. Politics uses the structure of caste to shape its own strategies and goals. On the other hand, caste and kinship groups use politics as a way to assert their identities and strive for power. The interaction between caste and politics brings new players into the contest for power.

Politicians often mobilise caste groups to build their political base. They use the established and flexible structure of caste, which, although traditionally a hierarchy, can be manipulated for political purposes. This manipulation is effective because caste is deeply rooted in people's consciousness. Besides caste, politicians also engage with other social groups to strengthen their influence. As politicians change the nature of these groups, they also transform the way caste functions in society.

The intersection of caste and politics in India is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that significantly shapes the country's political landscape. Renowned political scientist Rajni Kothari delves into this intricate relationship, highlighting how caste identities are leveraged for political mobilisation, the role of caste in electoral politics, and the formation of caste-based alliances. While caste can provide a robust framework for political organisation, it also perpetuates social hierarchies and inequalities, leading to both strategic advantages and significant challenges. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for comprehending the broader implications of caste-based politics on social cohesion and democratic processes in India.

The first-past-the-post (FPTP) system, used in Indian electoral system, significantly influences caste mobilisation in politics. In this system, the candidate with the most votes in a constituency wins, regardless of whether they achieve an absolute majority. This structure often leads political parties to focus on securing votes from specific, sizeable caste groups within constituencies, as winning requires only a plurality rather than a majority. Consequently, parties actively mobilise caste identities, creating targeted campaigns that appeal to the dominant caste or a coalition of castes in each area. This caste-based mobilisation strategy aims to consolidate a reliable vote bank, maximising the chances of electoral success in the FPTP system. While effective for winning elections, this approach can exacerbate social divisions, reinforcing caste identities and perpetuating caste-based inequalities in the political sphere.

But relying on caste for political mobilisation can lead to social fragmentation, as it emphasises caste differences over common goals. This focus on caste can hinder efforts to achieve broader social and economic justice, as it often distracts from addressing issues that affect all citizens, regardless of caste. For example, constant caste-based politicking can delay or divert attention from important policies on education, healthcare, and economic development that benefit the entire society.

6.5 RESERVATION FOR SCHEDULED CASTES

The Constitution of India enshrines various provisions to promote social justice and equality, particularly for historically marginalised communities. Affirmative action, also known as reservation policies, is a significant aspect of this commitment. These policies aim to uplift Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) by providing them with opportunities in education, employment, and political representation.

Scheduled Castes (SCs) are a group of historically disadvantaged communities identified in the Constitution of India. The term 'Scheduled Castes' was coined by the Government of India Act of 1935 and continues to be used

in the Constitution of India. These communities were traditionally subjected to severe social discrimination and economic exploitation. The Constitution of India includes several provisions for protection for affirmative action. It includes:

- **Article 15(4) and 15(5):** These clauses allow the state to make special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes, including SCs and STs. This includes reserving seats in educational institutions.

- **Article 16(4):** This permits the state to make reservations in public employment for any backward class of citizens that is not adequately represented in the services under the state.

- **Article 17:** This article abolishes 'untouchability' and forbids its practice in any form, declaring it as a punishable offense.

- **Article 46:** This Directive Principle of State Policy mandates the state to promote the educational and economic interests of SCs, STs, and other weaker sections.

- **Articles 330 and 332:** These articles provide for the reservation of seats for SCs and STs in the House of the People (Lok Sabha) and the State Legislative Assemblies.

These provisions collectively aim to address historical injustices and ensure equal opportunities for marginalised communities, thus fostering an inclusive and equitable society.

The key aspects of welfare of Scheduled Castes include:

- **Social Status:** SCs have historically been placed at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, enduring systemic discrimination and social ostracism. They were often relegated to menial jobs and denied access to education, temples, and public facilities.

- **Economic Conditions:** Traditionally, SCs were economically marginalised, with limited access to land and resources. Many were forced into bonded labour and other forms of economic exploitation.

- **Educational and Employment Opportunities:** Affirmative action policies have significantly improved access to education and employment for SCs. Reservation of seats in educational institutions and government jobs has played a crucial role in creating upward mobility within these communities.

- **Political Representation:** Reserved seats in Parliament and State Assemblies have ensured that SCs have a voice in legislative processes. This has facilitated the passage of laws and policies aimed at their upliftment.

- **Legal Protections:** Laws such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, provide legal safeguards against discrimination and violence, offering protection and legal recourse for victims.

Despite significant progress, SCs still face challenges such as economic disparity, and discrimination. Efforts continue to be made to address these issues through policy measures, legal reforms, and social initiatives.

The affirmative action provisions in the Constitution of India and the subsequent policies have played a pivotal role in improving the socio-economic status of Scheduled Castes, striving towards a more just and equitable society.

6.6 RESERVATION FOR OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES

The Mandal Commission, officially known as the Second Backward Classes Commission, was established in India in 1979 by the government. It was chaired by B.P. Mandal, a former member of Parliament. The primary mandate of the commission was to identify the socially or educationally backward classes of India and recommend measures for their advancement, particularly in public sector employment and educational institutions.

The Mandal Commission submitted its report in 1980, identifying 3743 castes as socially and educationally backward. Key recommendations included:

- **Reservation in Public Employment:** The commission recommended a 27% reservation for OBCs in government jobs, in addition to the existing 22.5% reservation for SCs and STs.

- **Reservation in Educational Institutions:** It suggested extending the 27% reservation to higher educational institutions to ensure that OBCs had better access to quality education.

- **Economic Criteria:** The commission proposed economic criteria to identify the 'creamy layer' within the OBCs, who would be excluded from the benefits of reservation to ensure that the benefits reached the most deprived sections.

While both SC and OBC reservations aim to promote social justice and equality, they differ in their historical context, eligibility criteria, extent of benefits, and challenges. SC reservations were introduced to primarily address untouchability and severe social exclusion, whereas OBC reservations focus on social and educational backwardness with considerations for economic exclusions. Both policies continue to evolve and impact Indian society and politics significantly.

The Mandal Commission's recommendations lay dormant for almost a decade until they were implemented in 1990. With the introduction of reservations for OBCs in education, employment, and political representation, previously marginalised OBC groups have gained greater access to these spheres, thereby challenging the political hegemony of traditionally dominant castes. OBC reservations have facilitated the redistribution of political power from caste elites to OBC communities. Through affirmative action policies, OBCs have gained access to political representation at various levels of government, thereby challenging the entrenched privileges enjoyed by traditionally dominant castes. This redistribution of political power has led to greater social equity and inclusion in political decision-making processes.

OBC reservations have also fuelled the rise of coalition politics in India, with political parties actively courting OBC voters to secure electoral victories. OBC communities, comprising a significant portion of the electorate in many states, have become key stakeholders in the political calculus of parties seeking to consolidate their support base. The Mandal Commission's implementation marked a watershed moment in Indian politics and society. It underscored the importance of affirmative action in addressing historical injustices and promoting social equity. While it led to significant empowerment and upliftment of OBC communities, it also brought to the fore the challenges of balancing affirmative action with societal harmony and meritocracy. The legacy of the Mandal Commission continues to influence Indian politics and policies, shaping the discourse on social justice and equality.

6.7 WOMEN AND RESERVATION

The Constitution incorporates various provisions to ensure protection to women and to promote their welfare. Article 15(3) empowers the state to make special provisions for women and children. Articles 39(a) and (d) provide directions to the state to ensure that men and women equally have a right to an adequate means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work. Further, it is enshrined under the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution that the interest of women be protected and promoted in multifarious spheres and provides a congenial legal framework for affirmative action.

The Women's Reservation Act is also officially known as the Constitution 128th Amendment Act, 2023. The key features of the Act includes:

- **Reservations for Women:** The Bill reserves, as nearly as may be, one-third of all seats in Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies, including the Legislative Assembly of Delhi, for women. This will also apply to the SCs and STs reserved seats in the Lok Sabha and the States' legislatures.

- **Commencement of Reservation:** Reservation shall come into effect after the publication of the census of which date of coming into operation shall also be undertaken. Delimitation shall be done based on such census to reserve seats for women. The reservation shall be for a period of 15 years. This reservation shall, however, be continued till such date as may be provided by Parliament by law.

- **Rotation of Seats:** Reserved seats for women shall be rotated after every delimitation on a basis as maybe provided for by Parliament.

Apart from constitutional, the government of India has brought forward many schemes and policies related to improving the socio-economic status of women across various sectors.

6.8 RESERVATION FOR ECONOMICALLY WEAKER SECTIONS

The Economically Weaker Section (EWS) reservation, introduced through the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019, marks a significant development in India's affirmative action policies. It provides a 10% reservation in education and public employment for individuals from the general category who are economically disadvantaged. This move aims to address economic disparities that persist even among those who do not fall under the traditional categories of Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC).

The introduction of EWS reservation is an important evolution in India's approach toward social justice and economic inclusion. The benefits of EWS reservation include:

- **Reduced Economic Inequalities and Inclusive Growth:** The EWS reservation aims to bring the wider society into its fold by bringing under its umbrella the economically deprived sections and extending the benefits of affirmative action to all those who need them irrespective of

caste or religion. This would, in effect, improve the level playing field and opportunities for upward mobility to the economically marginalised.

- **Educational Opportunities:** One major area of impact is higher education. When there is reservation of seats for the EWS category candidates, it shall ensure that meritorious students from economically weaker backgrounds get access to quality education, yielding better job opportunities with improved socio-economic status.

- **Employment Opportunities:** The reservation in public employment will ensure fair opportunities for the economically disadvantaged section of the general category to get government jobs and provide stable employment, hence reducing economic inequalities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the intricate interplay between caste and politics in India is a dynamic phenomenon that shapes the socio-political landscape in multifaceted ways. The implementation of reservation policies, particularly for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs), has been instrumental in challenging historical injustices and fostering greater social inclusion.

The Women's Reservation Act is a move to make women have an equal say in policy-making while implementation of the EWS quota has reshaped the socio-political calculus by amplifying the voices of marginalised communities with the hope of redistributing power regardless of their identities.

In-Text Questions

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. Affirmative action policies in India aim to uplift Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) by providing them with opportunities in _____, _____, and political representation.

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2. Article 17 of the Indian Constitution abolishes '_____' and forbids its practice in any form, declaring it a punishable offense.

3. The Mandal Commission recommended a 27% reservation for _____ in government jobs and higher educational institutions.

4. The implementation of the _____ report led to significant political realignment in India, bolstering parties advocating for social justice.

B. State True or False:

1. The Constitution of India includes provisions to protect and promote the welfare of historically marginalised communities through affirmative action.

2. The Mandal Commission was established in 1990 by Prime Minister V.P. Singh.

3. The term 'Scheduled Castes' was first coined by the Indian Constitution.

6.9 SUMMARY

• Rajni Kothari's work, 'Caste in Indian Politics,' describes caste as a social institution akin to an extended family structure, influencing social, economic, and political dimensions of individuals' lives.

• Caste acts as a cohesive force, fostering a sense of belonging and identity, with shared norms governing social interactions related to marriage, kinship, rituals, and occupation.

• It serves as a mechanism of social control, regulating behaviour and maintaining order, imposing social sanctions to uphold hierarchical relationships.

• Caste communities exhibit interdependence, mirroring mutual support within family structures, reinforcing reciprocity, and obligation.

• Castes preserve cultural heritage, transmitting traditions and practices across generations, sustaining identity and cohesion.

- Endogamy, a defining feature of caste, maintains social boundaries, preserving purity and restricting mobility, similar to class systems.

- Affirmative action, or reservation policies, in India's Constitution aims to uplift marginalised communities like SCs, STs, and OBCs by providing opportunities in education, employment, and politics.

- The Mandal Commission's recommendations for OBC reservations reshaped political dynamics.

6.10 GLOSSARY

- **Caste:** It is a traditional social stratification system in India, influencing social, economic, and political life.

- **Endogamy:** It is the practice of marrying within one's own social group or caste.

- **Casteism:** It is the discrimination or prejudice based on caste identity, often resulting in exclusion and disadvantage.

- **Dalit:** It is a term used to describe the 'oppressed' or 'untouchable' caste, facing historical discrimination in India.

- **Scheduled Castes (SCs):** These are communities recognised by the Indian Constitution as historically disadvantaged and eligible for special measures.

- **Other Backward Classes (OBCs):** These are socially and educationally backward communities identified for affirmative action benefits.

- **Mandal Commission:** It is a commission established to identify backward classes and recommend measures for their advancement, particularly in public employment and education.

6.11 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

A.

1. Education, employment

2. Untouchability

3. Other Backward Classes (OBC)

4. Mandal Commission

B.

1. True

2. False

3. False

6.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. How does Rajni Kothari describe the role of caste in Indian politics?

2. How does casteism differ from the broader concept of caste as a social institution?

3. In what ways has the Mandal Commission influenced Indian politics?

4. Write a note on the nature of Caste in India.

5. What is an affirmative action? Write a brief note on the reservation in India.

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School of Open Learning, University of Delhi

Unit V: Tribes and Politics

Lesson 7:   Policies and Challenges: Fifth and Sixth Schedules; Forest Rights Act; Development and Issues of Displacement

LESSON 7
POLICIES AND CHALLENGES: FIFTH AND SIXTH SCHEDULES; FOREST RIGHTS ACT; DEVELOPMENT AND ISSUES OF DISPLACEMENT

Devendra Dilip Pai
Assistant Professor,
School of Open Learning,
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

- Analyse a historical overview of tribes in India along with their nature and significance

NOTES

- Discuss the historical injustices inflicted upon tribes during British colonial rule

- Describe the constitutional safeguards and affirmative action policies aimed at protecting tribal rights

7.2 INTRODUCTION

Tribes are often called indigenous people, Adivasis or Vanavasis in the Indian context. With diverse languages, customs, and traditions, these communities have maintained a deep connection with nature and have often been marginalised in the socio-political landscape. Their journey through Indian politics reflects a complex interplay of historical injustices, modern challenges of industrialisation, along with urbanisation and ongoing efforts for recognition and empowerment.

7.3 NATURE AND CULTURE OF TRIBES

The tribes of India have a profound relationship with nature. Some of the attributes of tribes in India are discussed as follows:

- **Connection with Nature:** For these tribes, nature is not merely a resource to be exploited but a living entity intricately woven into their cultural and spiritual fabric. Their traditional knowledge systems, honed over generations, reflect a deep understanding of sustainable living practices that have sustained ecosystems in harmony with their surroundings.

- **Shift Cultivation:** One of the most striking examples of this symbiotic relationship is evident in their practice of shifting cultivation. Rather than depleting the land, as is often the case with modern agricultural practices, shifting cultivation involves rotating fields to allow land to regenerate naturally. This demonstrates not only a pragmatic approach

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to land management but also a profound respect for the environment and its capacity for renewal.

- **Diverse Culture:** Culturally, India's tribal communities exhibit a rich tapestry of diversity, with each community boasting its own distinct languages, rituals, and social structures.

- **Community Land Ownership:** The community ownership of land is a cornerstone of their social organisation, fostering a sense of collective responsibility towards their natural surroundings. Egalitarian social systems, where decision-making is often consensus-based and hierarchies are minimal, reflect values of equality and solidarity.

- **Oral Society:** Oral traditions play a pivotal role in preserving their cultural heritage, and passing down knowledge, stories, and rituals from one generation to the next. These traditions serve not only as repositories of wisdom but also as mechanisms for reinforcing social cohesion and identity. Most of the tribes don't have a script.

- **Indigenous Institutions:** Within tribal societies, governance often operates through a system of informal institutions and traditional leadership structures. Decision-making processes are often decentralised, with authority vested in community elders, chiefs, or councils who are respected for their wisdom, experience, and moral authority. These traditional leaders play a crucial role in mediating disputes, resolving conflicts, and upholding customary laws that govern social relations within the community.

- **Gender Equity in Tribes:** Women traditionally enjoy equal status in tribe. In some tribes, not just polygamy but even polyandry was a common practice. Women have a strong say in day-to-day affairs in a tribal household. In matrilineal tribes such as the Khasi and Garo in Meghalaya, women enjoy a higher status compared to many other societies. Inheritance and lineage pass through the female line, giving women significant control over family property and decision-making

within the household. The youngest daughter often inherits the family property and has the responsibility of caring for the elderly parents.

However, despite the resilience of their cultural identities, tribal communities have often found themselves under threat from external influences and policies that seek to assimilate or marginalise them. Rapid urbanisation, industrialisation, and infrastructure development have encroached upon their ancestral lands, disrupting their traditional way of life and eroding their cultural practices. Development projects, mining activities, and large-scale infrastructure projects often encroached upon tribal lands, displacing communities and disrupting their traditional way of life. Forced displacement led to the loss of livelihoods, erosion of cultural identities, and increased vulnerability to exploitation.

Furthermore, historical and contemporary policies of assimilation, often imposed by dominant societal forces, have sought to homogenise tribal communities into the mainstream, erasing their unique cultural identities in the process.

7.4 IMPACT OF COLONIAL RULE: FOREST RIGHTS ACT

Colonial rule in India had profound and often devastating effects on tribal communities. The British administration implemented policies and laws that disrupted traditional tribal systems, exploited their resources, and marginalised the communities.

The British imposed a centralised administration that undermined traditional tribal governance. Tribal leaders, who once held significant authority and autonomy, found their powers diminished as colonial officials took over administrative functions.

The introduction of land revenue systems and private property concepts disrupted the communal land ownership patterns prevalent among tribes. This

led to the alienation of tribal lands as they were often unable to understand or comply with the new legal frameworks, resulting in the loss of land to outsiders.

Forest Protection Act of 1865 and 1878 marked the beginning of systematic state control over forests, which were crucial to the livelihood of many tribal communities. The acts restricted tribal access to forests for hunting, gathering, and shifting cultivation, which were integral to their way of life. By declaring large tracts of forest land as reserved and protected, the British curtailed the tribes' traditional rights and criminalised their customary practices.

The expansion of the railways and other infrastructure projects led to the invasion of tribal lands. Large-scale deforestation and displacement occurred as the British built railways, roads, and other infrastructure. Tribes were often forcibly evicted from their ancestral lands, leading to loss of livelihood and cultural disintegration.

The British exploited tribal labour for plantations, mines, and construction projects. Tribes were often coerced into labour under harsh conditions, receiving meagre wages and facing severe exploitation. The introduction of cash crops and commercial forestry further disrupted their subsistence economy.

The British labelled some tribes as 'criminal tribes' under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. This stigmatised entire communities, subjecting them to surveillance, restrictions on movement, and compulsory registration, which reinforced their marginalisation and social exclusion.

Tribal Resistance and Revolts

Some of the revolts are discussed as follows:

- **Santhal Rebellion (1855-1856):** One of the most significant tribal uprisings was the Santhal Rebellion, where the Santhal tribe revolted against the exploitation and oppression by British landlords and moneylenders. The rebellion was brutally suppressed, but it highlighted the resistance against colonial policies.

- **Munda Rebellion (1899-1900):** Led by Birsa Munda, the Munda tribe of present-day Jharkhand revolted against the British and the zamindari system. Birsa Munda sought to establish Munda Raj and restore tribal lands. Though the rebellion was crushed, Birsa Munda became a symbol of tribal resistance.

- **Bhil Revolts:** The Bhils of western India have a history of resistance against external authorities, with notable uprisings occurring in different periods. One of the significant Bhil revolts took place in 1818-1831 against British colonial rule, particularly in the regions of Khandesh and surrounding areas in present-day Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. This revolt, led by Bhil leaders like Tantya Bhil and others, was a response to British encroachment on their lands, imposition of taxes, and the disruption of their traditional way of life.

7.5 TRIBES IN INDEPENDENT INDIA

The dawn of independence brought new hope for tribal communities with the framing of the Indian Constitution. The Constitution of India provides several measures to protect the rights and interests of tribal communities. These measures are designed to address the historical injustices faced by tribes, safeguard their cultural heritage, and promote their socio-economic development.

7.5.1 Key Constitutional Provisions and Measures: Fifth Schedule and Sixth Schedule

The key constitutional provisions and measures aimed at protecting tribal rights are discussed here:

Recognising the historical injustices inflicted upon tribes, the Constitution provided special provisions under Articles 244 and 275 to safeguard their interests. The Fifth Schedule and Sixth Schedule delineated areas with significant tribal populations, ensuring the protection of their land, culture, and self-governance.

1. Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas (Fifth and Sixth Schedules)

Fifth Schedule (Article 244(1)):

- Applies to the administration and control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any state except Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.

- Provides for the establishment of a Tribal Advisory Council (TAC) in each state with Scheduled Areas to advise on matters pertaining to the welfare and advancement of Scheduled Tribes.

- Governors of states with Scheduled Areas have special responsibilities to ensure the implementation of laws and policies for tribal welfare. They have the authority to make regulations for the peace and good governance of these areas, including regulating land transfers and business activities.

Sixth Schedule (Article 244(2) and Article 275(1)):

- Applies to the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.

- Provides for the establishment of Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) and Regional Councils with legislative, judicial, and administrative powers. These councils have the authority to make laws on a range of subjects, including land management, forest use, water resources, agriculture, and village administration.

- Ensures greater autonomy for tribal areas, allowing for self-governance and protection of tribal customs and traditions.

2. Reservation in Education and Employment

- *Article 15(4)*: Empowers the state to make special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes, including Scheduled Tribes.

- *Article 16(4)*: Provides for reservation in public employment for any backward class of citizens, including Scheduled Tribes, which is not adequately represented in the services under the state.

• *Article 46*: Directs the state to promote the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

3. Political Representation

• *Article 330 and Article 332*: Reserves seats for Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha (House of the People) and State Legislative Assemblies to ensure political representation.

4. Special Commissions and Bodies

• *Article 338A*: Establishes the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) to investigate, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of safeguards provided for STs under the Constitution and other laws. The NCST also advises on policy matters affecting Scheduled Tribes.

5. Protection of Cultural and Educational Rights

• *Article 29*: Protects the interests of minorities by allowing them to preserve their distinct language, script, or culture.

• *Article 350A*: Directs the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups, including tribal languages.

6. Protection of Tribal Lands and Resources

• *Article 19(5)*: Allows the state to impose reasonable restrictions on the right to freely move throughout India or reside and settle in any part of the country in the interest of the general public or for the protection of the interests of Scheduled Tribes.

7. Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA Act)

• Extends the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution, which deals with Panchayats, to Scheduled Areas with certain modifications.

- Empowers Gram Sabhas (village assemblies) in Scheduled Areas to manage resources, including minor forest produce, and to approve plans and projects for social and economic development.

- Ensures greater self-governance and participatory democracy for tribal communities by recognising their traditional rights and practices.

These constitutional measures reflect India's commitment to protecting the rights of tribal communities, promoting their socio-economic development, and preserving their cultural heritage. Effective implementation and enforcement of these provisions are crucial for addressing the challenges faced by tribal communities and ensuring their inclusive growth and empowerment.

Post-independence, successive governments initiated welfare programs and affirmative action policies to uplift tribal communities. Tribal sub-plans, reservations in educational institutions and government jobs, and decentralised governance through Panchayati Raj institutions aimed at empowering tribes politically and economically. However, implementation challenges, bureaucratic apathy, and continued marginalisation in mainstream society hindered the effectiveness of these measures.

Draupadi Murmu's election as the first tribal woman President of India in 2022 marks a significant milestone in the political and social landscape of the country. Her presidency is not only a personal achievement but also a powerful symbol of the increasing recognition and representation of tribal communities in Indian politics.

7.6 DEVELOPMENT VS. DISPLACEMENT DEBATE

One of the prime considerations regarding the lives of the tribal communities is the development versus displacement. Infrastructure and developmental projects like dams, factories, and roads are vital, on the one hand, for bringing about economic growth and ensuring an improved standard of life. On the other hand,

such projects lead to the displacement of the tribal people from their houses and homes and somehow disturbing their life and culture. This becomes a dilemma in which the quest for development is in clash with the betterment and rights of the tribals.

Need for Development

There is a need for development to take place to assist in making life better for people throughout the country. It provides better infrastructure, such as roads, schools, and hospitals, and employment opportunities. For instance, a large dam can irrigate farmland, generate electricity, and provide drinking water to millions of people. Obviously, in a country like India—where many are based in rural areas with few access roads, no electricity, no proper water supply, and no facilities other than a makeshift school or two—such projects are seen as the ways toward eradication of poverty and improvement in living standards.

Development projects promise to integrate tribals into the mainstream economy—putting money and means within their reach that would otherwise be difficult to access. A systematic transformation of infrastructure and economic base should, therefore, bring gainful employment to the Adivasis.

Reality of Displacement

'Development for the mainstream often translates to displacement and marginalisation for the tribals. What is termed as progress by the state is frequently experienced as destruction by those who are uprooted' says V. Xaxa who highlighted that development for urban communities comes at the cost of displacement.

Development exacts a very high price on tribal people. The displacement of tribals ensues when they are forcefully evicted from their native lands for the purpose of development. This is not just stripping them of their homes but also their lands—roots bound deep within their culture and traditions. For them, land is not just a place to stay, it is identity, livelihood, or even a spiritual practice.

A Bose adds 'The environmental cost of development projects is disproportionately borne by tribal communities. The destruction of forests and natural resources, which are integral to their way of life, reflects a deep-seated environmental injustice'

Many tribals, when displaced, often subsequently have a very hard time adapting to their new environments. Their traditional means of livelihood, such as farming or gathering forest produce, may be lost. But the problems are not just economic; it includes social challenges like poverty, unemployment, and loss of social cohesion that often arise when moved to alien areas. The amount of monetary compensation given by the state is usually not adequate, and rehabilitation may not match the expectations arrived at by people who get displaced.

Xaxa further states that 'displacement not only dislocates people physically but also leads to the disintegration of social structures and cultural practices that have sustained tribal communities for generations'.

Reconciling Development and Displacement

Hence, development with the tribals together refers to a push for increased development; that is, development should not be at the cost of the tribal communities. Tribal communities should, in this case, have a say in the planning and determination of the developmental activities. This also implies that their concerns or grievances are heard and they receive fair compensation plus proper rehabilitation if displacement turns out to be inevitable.

Governments must also strive to reduce displacement by first planning development alternatives that do not involve the dislocation of people from their land. Detailed social and environmental impact assessments must be conducted before the start of any project, not merely as an exercise in ticking the boxes but as a sincere exercise to ensure that the benefits of development are shared by all, including the Adivasis.

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The debate between development and displacement has many facets. While development is essential for progress, it surely has to be pursued keeping the rights and cultures of tribal communities central to it. Displacement is not to be taken as part of the development process but a challenge to be met with a will of planning and fair treatment as well as genuine protection of the lives and traditions of the Adivasis.

Conclusion

Contemporary debates between tribes and politics in India centre around critical issues such as land rights, resource management, political representation, socio-economic development, and cultural preservation. Tribes face significant challenges, including land alienation and displacement due to industrial and infrastructure projects, inconsistent implementation of the Forest Rights Act, and economic exploitation. Political representation, while constitutionally guaranteed, often falls short in terms of substantive influence, prompting calls for greater autonomy and effective self-governance structures like Autonomous District Councils. Additionally, there is an ongoing struggle to balance economic development with the protection of tribal lands and livelihoods, leading to debates over tailored development programs and better educational and employment opportunities.

Cultural preservation is another significant concern, as tribal communities strive to maintain their unique identities amid mainstream cultural influences and developmental pressures. Environmental conservation efforts sometimes clash with the traditional livelihoods of tribes, leading to debates on achieving conservation goals without displacing tribal communities. These issues highlight the need for a nuanced approach that respects tribal rights and cultures while promoting inclusive development and effective political representation.

Overall, the journey of tribes in Indian politics reflects a narrative of resilience, struggle, and gradual empowerment. From being victims of colonial

exploitation to champions of indigenous rights, tribes have persevered against formidable odds. As India marches towards inclusive development, recognising the intrinsic value of tribal cultures, respecting their rights over land and resources, and fostering genuine participation in decision-making processes are imperative for achieving true socio-political equity. Through concerted efforts to address historical injustices and promote inclusive growth, India can forge a future where tribal communities thrive as equal partners in the nation's progress. A journey towards a truly casteless society requires not only political will but also collective action and sustained commitment to building a nation where every citizen, regardless of caste or creed, can realise their full potential.

In-Text Questions

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. _____ traditions play a pivotal role in preserving their cultural heritage, passing down knowledge, stories, and rituals from one generation to the next.

2. Forest Protection Act of 1865 and _____ marked the beginning of systematic state control over forests, which were crucial to the livelihood of many tribal communities.

3. Led by_____, the Munda tribe of present-day Jharkhand revolted against the British and the zamindari system.

4. _____'s election as the first tribal woman President of India in 2022.

5. _____ protects the interests of minorities by allowing them to preserve their distinct language, script, or culture.

B. State True or False:

1. Egalitarian social systems, where decision-making is often consensus-based and hierarchies are minimal, reflect values of equality and solidarity.

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2. Women do not enjoy equal status in tribes.

3. Colonial rule in India had profound and often devastating effects on tribal communities.

4. The expansion of the railways and other infrastructure projects led to the invasion of tribal lands.

5. Article 332 directs the state to promote the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

7.7 SUMMARY

- The tribes of India have a profound relationship with nature, viewing it not just as a resource but as a living entity intertwined with their cultural and spiritual beliefs.

- Rapid urbanisation, industrialisation, and infrastructural development have encroached upon the ancestral lands o tribal people, disrupting their traditional way of life and eroding their cultural practices.

- Development projects, mining activities, and large-scale infrastructure projects often encroached upon tribal lands, displacing communities and disrupting their traditional way of life.

- Forced displacement led to loss of livelihoods, erosion of cultural identities, and increased vulnerability to exploitation.

- Colonial rule in India had profound and often devastating effects on tribal communities.

- Forest Protection Act of 1865 and 1878 marked the beginning of systematic state control over forests, which were crucial to the livelihood of many tribal communities.

- Large-scale deforestation and displacement occurred as the British built railways, roads, and other infrastructure.

- The British labelled some tribes as 'criminal tribes' under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871.

- The Constitution of India provides several measures to protect the rights and interests of tribal communities.

- Recognising the historical injustices inflicted upon tribes, the Constitution provided special provisions under Articles 244 and 275 to safeguard their interests.

- The Fifth Schedule and Sixth Schedule delineated areas with significant tribal populations, ensuring the protection of their land, culture, and self-governance.

- Post-independence, successive governments initiated welfare programs and affirmative action policies to uplift tribal communities.

- Development projects promise to integrate tribals into the mainstream economy—putting money and means within their reach that would otherwise be difficult to access.

- Governments must also strive to reduce displacement by first planning development alternatives that do not involve the dislocation of people from their land.

7.8 GLOSSARY

- **Tribe:** It is a social group typically consisting of families or communities linked by shared culture, language, and ancestry.

- **Symbiotic Relationship:** It is a close, long-term interaction between two different species, where at least one benefits.

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- **Polygamy:** It is the practice of having more than one spouse simultaneously.

- **Shifting Cultivation:** It is an agricultural practice where land is farmed temporarily and then abandoned to allow natural vegetation to regenerate while the cultivator moves to a new area.

- **Subsistence Economy:** It is an economic system where communities produce just enough resources to meet their own basic needs, with little to no surplus for trade.

- **Marginalisation:** It is the process of pushing a group or individual to the edge of society, limiting their access to resources, rights, and opportunities.

7.9 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

A.

1. Oral

2. 1878

3. Birsa Munda

4. Draupadi Murmu

5. Article 29

B.

1. True

2. False

3. True

4. True

5. False

7.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on the nature and culture of tribes in India.

2. What was the impact of colonial rule on tribes?

3. Write a note on tribes in Independent India.

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Unit VI: Dimensions of State in India

Lesson 8:   Welfare, Regulatory and Coercive

LESSON 8
WELFARE, REGULATORY AND COERCIVE

Devendra Dilip Pai
Assistant Professor,
School of Open Learning,
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

- Define the concept of a welfare state

- Understand the regulatory framework in India

- Discuss the instruments of state coercion

8.2   INTRODUCTION

The state plays a multifaceted role in society, particularly in a diverse and populous country like India serving as the primary organiser of social, economic, and political life. To understand the state's functions and impact, it is essential to explore its various dimensions. Among these, the welfare, regulatory, and coercive dimensions are particularly significant. These dimensions highlight how the state seeks to improve citizens' well-being, regulate various sectors to ensure fairness and safety, and maintain order and security through law enforcement and defense mechanisms.

Each dimension provides a unique perspective on the state's responsibilities and actions. The welfare dimension focuses on programs and policies aimed at enhancing the quality of life for all citizens, particularly the marginalised and disadvantaged. The regulatory dimension underscores the importance of establishing and enforcing rules to ensure economic and social order. The coercive dimension deals with the state's use of force and legal authority to maintain internal security and defend against external threats. By examining these dimensions, we gain a comprehensive understanding of the state's role and its multifaceted approach to governance.

In India, the state plays a multifaceted role, balancing a range of responsibilities that cater to the diverse needs and aspirations of its vast population.

8.3   WELFARE STATE

The Oxford Dictionary of Politics defines welfare states as, 'A government that provides for the welfare, or the well-being, of its citizens through various social programs such as healthcare, unemployment benefits, pensions, and other social services.'

According to Paul Spiker (The Welfare State: A General Theory), 'The welfare state is a system of government in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of its citizens. It is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth, and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life.'

TH Marshall defines it as 'A distinctive combination of democracy, welfare, and capitalism. It involves the use of state power to provide social services and ensure economic welfare through measures such as social insurance, public health, education, and housing.'

The concept of the welfare state is deeply rooted in the evolution of liberal thought, which emphasises individual freedoms, equal opportunities, and social justice. The welfare state's origins can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, emerging from the need to address the social and economic inequalities brought about by industrialisation and capitalism.

Initially, classical liberalism focused on limiting state interference in economic and personal affairs, advocating for free markets and individual liberties. Thinkers like Adam Smith emphasised the '*invisible hand*' of the market, believing it would lead to societal prosperity. By the late 19th century, it became clear that unchecked capitalism led to significant social inequalities and economic hardships for many. Social liberalism emerged as a response, advocating for a more active role of the state in addressing these issues. Key figures such as John Stuart Mill began to argue that the state should intervene to promote individual welfare and social justice. In the early 20th century, new liberalism further developed these ideas. It emphasised that true freedom could only be achieved when individuals had access to basic necessities such as education, healthcare, and social security. This period saw the introduction of reforms aimed at providing these services. Thinkers like T.H. Green and Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse were instrumental in shaping these ideas.

A landmark in the development of the welfare state was the publication of the Beveridge Report in 1942 by British economist William Beveridge. The report outlined a comprehensive plan for social insurance and allied services to combat the 'Five Giants' on the road to post-war reconstruction: Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, and Idleness. It laid the foundation for the modern welfare state in the United Kingdom. Post-World War II, many Western democracies, particularly in Europe, began to implement welfare state policies. These included public healthcare systems (like the National Health Service in the UK), social security, unemployment insurance, and public housing. These measures aimed to ensure a minimum standard of living for all citizens, thus reducing social inequalities and promoting social cohesion.

India's approach to welfare has been influenced by its socialist principles, particularly following independence in 1947. In India, the welfare state concept aims to reduce inequality, provide essential services, and ensure a decent standard of living for all. This dimension includes programs targeting health, education, employment, and social security. The state's commitment to welfare is evident in its extensive network of policies and schemes designed to uplift the poorest and most vulnerable sections of society. The state's commitment to providing 'cradle to grave' services reflects its dedication to social justice and economic equality, drawing inspiration from both Gandhian and Nehruvian socialism.

The key aspects of Indian state's welfare dimension include:

• **Constitutional Provisions:** The Indian Constitution embodies the principles of socialism and welfare. The Preamble explicitly states that India is a 'socialist' republic. Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV) guide the state in making laws and policies aimed at promoting social and economic welfare. These include securing a living wage, equal pay for equal work, and free legal aid.

• **Public Sector:** Post-independence, under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership, India adopted a mixed economy model with a significant role for the public sector in key industries. The focus was

on economic development, poverty alleviation, and self-reliance. This period witnessed the establishment of numerous public sector enterprises to drive industrialisation and provide employment.

- **Social Welfare Schemes:** Over the decades, India has implemented various social welfare schemes aimed at different sections of society. Some of them are discussed as follows:

  o *Education*: The Right to Education Act, 2009, ensures free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14.

  o *Healthcare*: The National Health Mission (NHM) and more recently, the Ayushman Bharat scheme, aim to provide affordable and accessible healthcare to all.

  o *Employment*: The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) guarantees 100 days of wage employment per year to rural households.

  o *Food Security*: The Public Distribution System (PDS) and the National Food Security Act aim to ensure food security by providing subsidised food grains to the poor section of society.

  o *Housing*: The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) aims to provide affordable housing for all. This scheme targets urban and rural poor, offering financial assistance for the construction or improvement of housing.

- **Cradle to Grave Services:** This phrase captures the Indian state's commitment to providing continuous welfare support throughout a citizen's life. Examples include:

  o *Infant and Maternal Care*: Schemes like Janani Suraksha Yojana promote safe childbirth and maternal health.

  o *Childhood*: The Mid-Day Meal Scheme was launched to improve nutrition and school attendance.

o ***Working Age***: Employment programs like MNREGA and skill development initiatives took place.

o ***Old Age***: Pension schemes such as the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme provide financial support to the elderly.

While India has made significant strides in welfare provision, challenges such as large size of the country, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and uneven implementation persist. Recent reforms aim to improve efficiency and coverage, including the use of technology (e.g., Aadhaar for direct benefit transfers) and public-private partnerships.

8.4 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF STATE

The concept of regulatory frameworks evolved alongside the development of modern states and economies. Historically, governments have always regulated certain aspects of society and the economy, but the scope and complexity of regulation expanded significantly during the Industrial Revolution and the 20th century.

In ancient and medieval times, states regulated markets, trade, and guilds to control prices and quality of goods. Examples include the Roman Empire's grain dole and medieval trade guilds in Europe. The rapid industrialisation in the 18th and 19th centuries led to significant social and economic changes, necessitating more comprehensive regulatory measures. For instance, the Factory Acts in the UK regulated working conditions in factories. The Great Depression of the 1930s prompted extensive regulatory reforms, such as the New Deal in the United States, which established various regulatory bodies and frameworks to stabilise the economy and protect consumers.

The regulatory dimension involves the state's responsibility to establish and enforce rules and standards to ensure order, fairness, and safety in various sectors. In India, this dimension encompasses economic regulation, social regulation, and

administrative oversight. Regulatory bodies are tasked with ensuring compliance with laws, protecting consumer rights, and promoting fair competition. Effective regulation is crucial for maintaining a stable and transparent environment that fosters economic growth and social justice.

A few examples of India's regulatory framework include:

- **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI):** The SEBI regulates the securities market, ensuring transparency, protecting investor interests, and preventing malpractices. It plays a crucial role in maintaining market integrity and boosting investor confidence.

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI):** The RBI regulates the banking and financial sector, controlling monetary policy, ensuring financial stability, and supervising banking operations. It is pivotal in managing inflation, liquidity, and overall economic stability.

- **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI):** The FSSAI sets standards for food products, ensuring safety and quality. It plays a key role in protecting public health by regulating food production, distribution, and sale.

- **Competition Commission of India (CCI):** The CCI promotes competition and prevents anti-competitive practices in the market. It ensures that markets function efficiently, benefiting consumers and businesses alike.

- **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI):** The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) regulates the telecommunications sector, ensuring fair practices, protecting consumer interests, and promoting competition.

A robust regulatory framework is crucial for the effective functioning of any state. It maintains market order, protects public interests, and ensures fairness and stability. The evolution of regulatory frameworks, influenced by historical and economic developments, has led to diverse yet comparable systems worldwide.

In India, the regulatory framework reflects the country's socio-economic context, addressing specific needs through institutions like SEBI, RBI, FSSAI, CCI, and TRAI. Strong mechanisms in sectors like digital payments, telecommunications, and consumer protection highlight the dynamic and adaptive nature of India's regulatory environment, ensuring that it continues to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

8.5 INSTRUMENTS OF STATE COERCION

In any organised society, the state plays a pivotal role in maintaining order, enforcing laws, and protecting its citizens from internal and external threats. To achieve these objectives, the state employs various instruments of coercion, which are mechanisms or agencies that enforce compliance through the use or threat of force. These instruments are essential for upholding the rule of law, ensuring public safety, and preserving national security.

The instruments of state coercion can be broadly categorised into law enforcement agencies, military forces, and intelligence agencies. Law enforcement agencies, such as the police, are responsible for maintaining internal order, preventing crime, and apprehending offenders. The military, encompassing the army, navy, and air force, protects the nation from external threats and ensures territorial integrity. Intelligence agencies gather information crucial for national security, pre-empting potential threats, and advising the government on security matters.

In the context of democratic societies, the use of coercive power by the state is typically regulated by legal frameworks and oversight mechanisms to prevent abuse and protect civil liberties. However, the balance between ensuring security and upholding individual rights is a delicate and often contentious issue. Understanding the nature, scope, and functioning of these instruments of coercion is crucial for comprehending the broader dynamics of state power and governance.

This dimension is essential for the state's ability to uphold the rule of law and protect citizens from internal and external threats. In India, the coercive dimension includes law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, and the military. While necessary for maintaining stability, the exercise of coercive power must be balanced with respect for civil liberties and human rights.

Some examples of the Indian state's coercive dimension include:

- **Police Forces:** The Police is responsible for maintaining internal law and order, preventing, and investigating crimes, and ensuring public safety. Police forces operate at both the state and central levels in India, addressing everything from everyday law enforcement to managing civil unrest.

- **Military Forces:** The Indian Armed Forces are tasked with defending the country from external threats, ensuring territorial integrity, and supporting the state in times of emergencies such as natural disasters. Each branch specialises in different areas of defence—land, sea, and air.

- **Intelligence Agencies:** The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) is India's foreign intelligence agency responsible for gathering external intelligence, conducting counter-terrorism operations, and advising the Indian government on matters of national security. It operates covertly to protect the nation's interests abroad.

- **Paramilitary Forces:** The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is one of India's largest paramilitary forces, playing a critical role in maintaining internal security, combating insurgency, and managing border security in conjunction with other forces. It often operates in regions experiencing internal conflict or unrest.

- **Judicial and Penal Systems:** The judiciary, including courts and judges, enforces laws, adjudicates disputes, and administers justice. The prison system detains individuals convicted of crimes, aiming to

rehabilitate offenders and prevent further criminal activity. Both systems ensure that legal consequences are applied to unlawful actions, thereby upholding the rule of law.

In addition, there are specific instruments which enhance the state's capacity to enforce laws, maintain order, and protect citizens. They include acts like:

- **Public Safety Acts (like the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act)**

  Objective: To detain individuals considered a threat to public order and security.

  Implementation: Allows for preventive detention without trial for a specified period.

  Impact: Used to maintain public order in sensitive regions but controversial due to concerns over arbitrary detention and civil rights abuses.

- **National Security Act (NSA)**

  Objective: To provide for preventive detention in cases where national security is threatened.

  Implementation: Allows the state to detain individuals suspected of activities threatening national security for up to 12 months without a charge.

  Impact: Effective in pre-empting potential threats but criticised for misuse and infringement on personal freedoms.

Conclusion

Understanding the multifaceted role of the state in India requires a comprehensive examination of its welfare, regulatory, and coercive dimensions. Each of these dimensions reveals a distinct aspect of the state's functions and responsibilities, reflecting its commitment to enhancing the well-being of its citizens, maintaining order, and ensuring equitable growth.

The welfare dimension underscores the state's role in promoting social justice and improving the quality of life through programs such as MNREGA,

the National Health Mission, and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. These initiatives highlight the state's efforts to address poverty, health disparities, and educational inequalities, demonstrating its commitment to uplifting the most vulnerable sections of society.

The regulatory dimension emphasises the importance of a well-regulated environment that ensures fairness, transparency, and safety. Regulatory bodies like the SEBI, FSSAI, and RBI play crucial roles in maintaining economic stability, protecting consumer rights, and fostering a conducive environment for growth. These institutions help balance the interests of various stakeholders, promoting trust and integrity in the system.

The coercive dimension highlights the state's responsibility to maintain law and order, protect national security, and enforce legal standards. Through laws like the Public Safety Acts, and the NSA, the state exercises its authority to address internal and external threats. While these measures are vital for ensuring security and stability, they also raise important considerations about the balance between state power and individual rights.

By exploring these dimensions, we gain a nuanced understanding of the state's multifaceted role in governance. The welfare, regulatory, and coercive dimensions collectively illustrate the state's comprehensive approach to addressing the diverse needs and challenges of its population. This holistic perspective is essential for analysing the complexities of state functions and the impact of its policies on society. Ultimately, recognising and appreciating these dimensions enables us to better understand the intricate dynamics of governance and the pivotal role of the state in shaping the future of the nation.

In-Text Questions

A. Fill in the blanks:

1. The concept of the welfare state is deeply rooted in the evolution of liberal thought, which emphasises individual freedoms, equal opportunities, and_____.

2. A landmark in the development of the welfare state was the publication of the Beveridge Report in _____ by British economist William Beveridge.

3. Post-independence, under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership, India adopted a _____ economy model with a significant role for the public sector in key industries.

4. The _____ of the 1930s prompted extensive regulatory reforms.

5. The _____ regulates the telecommunications sector, ensuring fair practices, protecting consumer interests, and promoting competition.

B. State True or False:

1. The welfare state's origins can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

2. The Right to Education Act, 2009, ensures free and compulsory education for children aged 8 to 14.

3. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) guarantees 154 days of wage employment per year to rural households.

4. Effective regulation is crucial for maintaining a stable and transparent environment that fosters economic growth and social justice.

5. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is one of India's largest paramilitary forces.

8.6 SUMMARY

• The concept of the welfare state is deeply rooted in the evolution of liberal thought, which emphasises individual freedoms, equal opportunities, and social justice.

- The welfare state's origins can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, emerging from the need to address the social and economic inequalities brought about by industrialisation and capitalism.

- Thinkers like Adam Smith emphasised the 'invisible hand' of the market, believing it would lead to societal prosperity.

- A landmark in the development of the welfare state was the publication of the Beveridge Report in 1942 by British economist William Beveridge. The report outlined a comprehensive plan for social insurance and allied services to combat the 'Five Giants' on the road to post-war reconstruction: Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, and Idleness.

- India's approach to welfare has been influenced by its socialist principles, particularly following independence in 1947.

- The concept of regulatory frameworks evolved alongside the development of modern states and economies.

- In ancient and medieval times, states regulated markets, trade, and guilds to control the prices and quality of goods.

- The regulatory dimension involves the state's responsibility to establish and enforce rules and standards to ensure order, fairness, and safety in various sectors.

- Effective regulation is crucial for maintaining a stable and transparent environment that fosters economic growth and social justice.

- A robust regulatory framework is crucial for the effective functioning of any state. It maintains market order, protects public interests, and ensures fairness and stability.

- The instruments of state coercion can be broadly categorised into law enforcement agencies, military forces, and intelligence agencies.

NOTES

• In the context of democratic societies, the use of coercive power by the state is typically regulated by legal frameworks and oversight mechanisms to prevent abuse and protect civil liberties.

8.7 GLOSSARY

• **Welfare State:** It is a government system that provides social security, healthcare, and financial assistance to ensure the well-being of its citizens.

• **Capitalism:** It is an economic system where private individuals or businesses own and control property and production, driven by profit in a competitive market.

• **Industrialisation:** It is the process of transforming an economy from primarily agricultural to one dominated by industry and manufacturing.

• **State Coercion:** It is the use of force or threats by a government to enforce laws, maintain order, or achieve compliance from its citizens.

8.8 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

A.

1. Social justice

2. 1942

3. Mixed

4. Great Depression

5. Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

B.

1. True

2. False

3. False

4. True

5. True

8.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is a welfare state?

2. What is the regulatory framework of a state?

3. Discuss the instruments of state coercion.

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