ABSTRACT

Some the political parties have their origin from before India’s independence, for example, Indian National Congress, Forward Bloc, Alkali Dale, National Conference and some other parties. Some of these parties were either social or political organization before India’s independence and they became political parties after India’s independence. But many of the present parties were established after India’s independence. Members, who split from larger parties, established some of these parties. For example in the 1960s, Look Dale was established by people who split from the Indian National Congress. Communist Party of India (Marxist) was established after the split in Communist Party of India and there are other such examples. The Indian political parties are categorized into two main types: national level parties and state level parties. A political party shall be treated as a recognized political party in a State, if and only if either the conditions specified in Clause (A) are, or the condition specified in Clause (B) is, fulfilled by that party and not otherwise, that is to say-(A) that such party has been engaged in political activity for a continuous period of five years; and has, at the last general election in that State to the House of the People, or, as the case may be, to the Legislative Assembly of the State, returned-

either (i) at least one member to the House of the People for every twenty-five members of that House or any fraction of that number from that State;

or (ii) at least one member to the Legislative Assembly of that State for every thirty members of that Assembly or any fraction of that number;

(B) that the total number of valid votes polled by all the contesting candidates set up by such party at the last general election in the State to the House of the People, or as the case may be, to the Legislative Assembly of the State, is not less than six per cent of the total number of valid votes polled by all the contesting candidates at such general election in the State.

The conditions in Clause (A) or Clause (B) above shall not be deemed to have been fulfilled by a political party, if a member of the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State becomes a member of that political party after his election to that House or, as the case may be, that Assembly.

‘State’ includes the National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Union Territory of Pondicherry.

If a political party is treated as a recognized political party in four or more States, it shall be known as a ‘National Party’ throughout the whole of India, but only so long as that political party continues to fulfill the conditions for recognition in four or more States on the results of any subsequent general election either to the House of the People or to the Legislative Assembly of any State.

If a political party is treated as a recognized political party in less than four States, it should be known as a ‘State Party’ in the State or States in which it is so recognized, but only so long as that political party continues to fulfill thereafter the conditions for recognition on the results of any subsequent general election to the House of the People or, as the case may be, to the Legislative Assembly of the State, in the said State or States.

National Party

These are political parties which, participate in different elections all over India. For example, Indian National Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Samajwadi Party, Communist Party of India, Communist Party of InNational Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Flag</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bahujan Samaj Party</td>
<td>BSP</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Mayawati</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Party Name</td>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Year Recognized</td>
<td>Leader/Founder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)</td>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Gadkari, Nitin Nitin Gadkari</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Communist Party of India (CPI)</td>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Reddy, Suravaram Sudhakar Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI (M))</td>
<td>CPI (M)</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Karat, Prakash Karat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Indian National Congress (INC)</td>
<td>INC</td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Regional parties**

The Election Commission might recognize a political party that participate, in different elections and receive certain amount of votes or seats in a state as a state party. Recognition as a state party gives the party the possibility to reserve a particular election symbol in the concerned state. After the issue of allocation of election symbol to BSP when it was recognized as a National Party (both the BSP and AGP were using Elephant as their election symbol, when BSP got the national recognition AGP objected to allocation of Elephant symbol to BSP which legally could use it in Assam; as a compromise BSP uses elephant all over India except in Assam). Now Election commission does not allocate the symbol reserved for a state party to other parties recognized even in different state. A party might be recognized in more than one state. A party recognized in four states is automatically recognized as a national party. For example Shiva Sena participates only in Maharashtra, Taequu Demas in Andhra Pradesh, Alkali Dale in Punjab, Dravidic Moneta Kazagham (DMK) in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka State recently Karnataka janata Party (B.S. Yedurappa) there are other such state parties.

There are some small communist parties who participate only within one state. Some states have more than one state party. For example in Tamil Nadu another important state party is All India Anna Dravidi Moneta Kazagham (AIADMK). Because of these long party names many party names are abbreviated to their initials.

Some the political parties have their origin from before India’s independence, for example, Indian National Congress, Forward Bloc, Alkali Dale, National Conference and some other parties. Some of these parties were either social or political organization before India’s independence and they became political parties after India’s independence. But many of the present parties were established after India’s independence. Members, who split from larger parties, established some of these parties. For example in the 1960s, Look Dale was established by people who split from the Indian National Congress. Communist Party of India (Marxist) was established after the split in Communist Party of India and there are other such examples.

In Indian politics, there are political parties in which one person pulls all the strings. This feature existed even before India’s independence, when Mahatma Gandhi was the father figure of the Indian National Congress until his death in 1948 even though he resigned from the Congress in 1933. Indira Gandhi for some period was in complete control of her party. Her party was also named, Congress (Indira). Shiv Sena is virtually owned by Bal Thakarey. Even when the Shiv Sena won the state elections in Maharashtra, Bal Thakarey handled the establishment of the state government but did not appoint himself as the Chief Minister. He appointed someone else to this post. Some of these parties, like the Shiv Sena in which one person pulls all the strings, have their stronghold in the public not because of their leader but because of party ideology. While other parties are completely dependent on the respect the leader of the party has in the public. Many of the large national parties have a pre-election agreement with smaller parties on joint candidates in some constituencies. This candidate belongs to one of the parties and the other party supports this candidate. This is done to prevent a possibility of parties, with common national agenda or common state agenda, nominate their own different candidates causing the splitting of the votes of their wing and so losing the constituency to the rival wing.

In Indian politics there are also many independent candidates. These candidates participate in election constituencies independently without the support of any party. In very few cases the larger parties also support independent candidates. Another feature unique to Indian politics is the high number of film actors who join the Indian politics. The Indian cinema produces films in different languages. The largest and most popular film industry is the Hindi language film industry. Many national parties recruit Hindi movie actors in their parties. While many state parties with state chauvinism attract local film industry actors in their parties. These actors do not only appear along side with the party politicians to attract the mob towards the politicians gatherings, but they even participate as candidates in elections. Some of the state parties in south India were established by former movie actors.

**Evolution of Indian polity**

From the 7th to the 11th century, lack of interaction between Indians and their Iranian cousins and others in Central Asia, conquered and dominated by Arab-led Islamic forces, made India inward looking and fossilized its caste-based polity. Indian polity lost its mobility, resilience and the capacity to synthesize and assimilate new ideas. It went on the offensive against the conquering Islamic religion and Muslim polity. It
withdraw into its own shell and became frozen. And so it re-
mained throughout the Muslim rule and British rule over Hin-
dustan. The latter only perpetuated the static nature of Hindu
polity, reducing Indian rulers as their aides, notwithstanding
some social reform ripples. Indians never had a revolution,
like the French, Americans, Russians or the Chinese. The
Dharma (religion and duty), put one in one’s place. A head-
man’s son could aspire to be a headmen, an untouchable
would remain an untouchable. The process of peaceful mas-
sume social engineering through competitive party politics and
reservations in favor of the disadvantaged since independ-
ence has unleashed social, political and economic forces
hitherto unseen in Indian history, in the process rearranging
its polity. It shattered the Brahmin-imposed village autonomy
based on a rigid hierarchy of priests, landowners, traders,
artisans and untouchables, which had survived Muslim and
British rule.

Soon, former bus conductors, petty smugglers, village pehel-
wans (wrestlers), and the progeny of peons could rise to the
highest levels of government as chief ministers and cabinet
ministers, as shown by the Lals of Haryana, the Yadavs of
Uttar Pradesh and others. Imagine the creative and other en-
ergies released into the system, with the profession of politics
providing an ambitious and determined person, but poor, un-
educated, socially and economically disadvantaged, the op-
portunity to work his or her way up the system.

Unfortunately, in this free-for-all environment, many criminal
elements, after first helping the politicians in vote “gathering
and controlling”, like an Arab’s camel, have moved into the
tent (of power). And the system’s inbuilt resilience for correc-
tive action now appears to have been lost. After watching the
slide into dishonesty, chicanery and total disregard for all civic
norms, first the Election Commission and then the Supreme
Court took some measures to strengthen these independent
institutions, but without great success so far.

The “Hindu” perception of Dharma and the rule of law is of-
ten quite ambivalent. Hindus believe that by propitiating local
deities and gods (now the local politician, now the police sub-
inspector), one can escape punishment. It is hoped that rec-
commendations for an independent Vigilance Commissioner,
a Central Bureau of Investigation and an Enforcement Direc-
torate will be fully implemented, and that the implementation
of the rule of law will be further strengthened, with the proper
checks and balances of a truly democratic system. The insti-
tutions of the judiciary and the media, so easily tempted by
wily politicians, have to be above suspicion and exercise their
duties without fear and favor.

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