

## Regional Parties and Democracy

### Romantic Rendezvous Or Localized Legitimation?

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Ever since the decline of Congress became apparent, two features of Indian politics have attracted the attention of students of Indian political process. One is the coalition-based structure of party politics and the other is the rise of many smaller and regional parties to prominence in national level politics. Even a casual observer will not miss these features, which emerged in the nineties. What is remarkable about these features is that Congress was not / is not being replaced by any single party. Thus, a wide range of regional formations has become the centerpiece of the emerging party system. The present paper summarizes the electoral performance of regional parties since the mid-nineties. It also attempts to map the geographical and ideological space occupied by these parties. Thirdly, the paper tries to conjecture about the nature of social support enjoyed by the regional parties. Finally, we shall try to situate the regional parties within a broader framework of India's political process.

#### I

Often, a party is easily identified as a 'regional' party if it propagates the ideology of regionalism or thrives on invocation of regional pride. Parties like Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) or Telugu Desam Party (TDP) or Dravid Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) are quickly recognized as regional parties. However, yet another type of parties needs to be incorporated in the category of regional party. These are parties, which enjoy considerable support only in one state of the Indian union. Such parties may not emphasize their regionalist outlook. They have, in fact, an all-India perspective but only a regional reach. Forward Block (FB) and Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) in West Bengal or Peasants' and Workers' Party (PWP) in Maharashtra may be cited as examples. The nineties have witnessed the rise of such parties in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. In fact, together with the 'regionalist' parties, these parties are also playing an important role in the political developments that unfolded in the nineties.

Yet another point deserves mention. Observers of Indian politics often accept, even though grudgingly, that 'regional' parties and their leaders have a somewhat legitimate claim over power structures at the local and state level. But, these leaders are not supposed to stake claims to power at the all-India level. This power seems to be reserved for leaders with a non-parochial (meaning non-regional) background. Mention of state leaders aspiring for national level power is frequently made with a pinch of cynical censure. Words like local subedars, regional satraps, etc. are found not only in journalistic vocabulary but also in the lexicon of scholarly political analyses. It betrays a bias against regional parties and regional leaders.

We shall proceed with the simple test of popular–electoral support. When a party is practically confined to only one state, it may be treated as a regional party even if its leaders nurse all-India ambitions or its nomenclature declares the party to be all-India. Thus understood, the Trinmul Congress (TC), Samajwadi Party (SP), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Samata Party, would be treated as regional parties along with self-proclaimed regionalist parties. Alternatively, these parties have been referred to as state-based parties<sup>1</sup> and single-state parties<sup>2</sup>. (In a lighter vein, one could add to this a category of single-individual parties like those of Chandrashekhar, Subramanyam Swamy, and so on!)

We shall exclude from our discussion of regional parties, the two Communist parties and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). It is often pointed out that CPI (M) has been confined only to West Bengal and Kerala and CPI is, in any case, a small party now. But CPI (M) has a presence in Assam, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Tamil Nadu (TN) while CPI has also some base in AP, Bihar, Punjab and TN. In the case of BSP, its base in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), (4.8 per cent in 1999), Madhya Pradesh (MP), Punjab, and Rajasthan, justifies our exclusion of this party from the category of regional parties.

### ***Rise of Regional Parties***

Existence of regional parties is nothing new. Their entry into national level politics is however a new phenomenon. In 1977, the Akali Dal and DMK were partners in the Janata government although; the Janata Party had a clear majority (295 seats) on its own. This was the first time that regional parties shared power at the national level. There were 51 members belonging to various regional parties in 1977. In 1980, regional parties lost their newly found moment of glory when Congress returned to power. DMK managed to win 16 seats but Akalis were reduced to one seat and the total tally of regional parties including the smaller left parties of West Bengal remained only 35 in the seventh Lok Sabha. The elections to the eighth Lok Sabha were held in the backdrop of Indira Gandhi's assassination. But in 1984, regional parties increased their share in Lok Sabha. There were 76 members belonging to different regional parties in the eighth Lok Sabha. The rise of Telugu Desam in Andhra and Asom Gana Parishad in Assam were the main factors responsible for this performance of the regional parties. However, with Congress having 415 seats in Lok Sabha, the role of regional parties was bound to be insignificant in national politics.

Non-Congressism brought many regional parties together in the National Front (NF) formed in 1988. These included TDP, DMK, AGP and Congress (S) apart from the newly formed Janata Dal. But in the elections in 1989, these regional parties did not meet with success. In the ninth Lok Sabha, 48 members belonged to regional parties but the regional allies of NF had only two seats (won by TDP). In spite of their disastrous performance, these regional parties became partners in the NF led government of 1989. In 1991, the strength of regional parties in the Lok Sabha was at 57 but this time around TDP had a fair share (13 seats). AIADMK, Janata Dal (G), Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) and Kerala Congress supported the Congress government

of Narsimha Rao. However, these parties were not part of the government. In any case, both in 1989 and 1991, regional parties were playing a crucial role at the national level in making or unmaking the central government. Thus, the 1977 elections not only sped up the demise of the Congress system but also inaugurated a new era of partnership between all-India parties and regional parties; something which never happened in the pre-1977 period.

Since 1996, regional parties have become indispensable in the formation of government at the national level. They have been important partners in the coalitions that came to power after 1996. Besides, numerical strength of the regional parties has considerably increased, with a sizable vote share being captured by regional parties. Finally, regional parties have emerged in a large number of states. The experiment of United Front (UF) government first underscored the centrality of regional parties to national politics. In the 1996 Lok Sabha 137 MPs belonged to various regional parties. At that time, it appeared that most regional parties were gravitating against the BJP. Thus, 95 of the 137 MPs belonging to regional parties were part of the UF coalition. This gave rise to the impression that regional parties were occupying the 'third' space-outside of Congress and BJP. Soon, this picture disappeared almost as quickly as a rainbow disappears. And the UF was actually described as a rainbow coalition. Rainbows are ephemeral. They make a good view but do not last long. The United Front proved to be similarly short-lived although its supporters drew satisfaction from the fact that a large number of parties agreed to block a communal party from coming to power.

The regional forces—at least some of them—quickly switched over to the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in 1998. The Lok Sabha in 1998 included 162 MPs belonging to regional parties; 92 of these were part of the NDA. TDP, which was one of the leading parties of UF, chose to join the NDA, which proved crucial for the survival of the government. Another regional party, AIADMK, played a decisive role in defeating the NDA government. The thirteenth Lok Sabha (1999) has 168 MPs who belong to regional parties. The NDA includes 109 MPs from different regional parties. In all, 32 regional parties are represented in the 13<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha of which 15 are part of NDA, four are constituents of Left Front (6 MPs), six were Congress allies (23 MPs) and seven parties have not joined any front or alliance (38 MPs). (See Tables No. 1-3). It may be noted that the above discussion of 1999 elections does not treat JD (U) as a regional party although this party consists of four regional groups – Samata Party of Bihar, JD of Bihar, Lok Shakti of Karnataka and one JD faction from Karnataka. There is little coordination between the Karnataka unit and the Bihar unit of JD. Also, relations between the Samata faction and JD faction in Bihar are only nominal. The JD (U) won 17 seats in Bihar and 3 seats in Karnataka.

It can be observed that since 1996, the BJP and Congress together get a little over fifty per cent share of the total votes. The communist parties, BSP and JD were the three other non-regional parties. Together, they had not more than 20 per cent votes. Thus, at least one fourth of the electorate voted for regional or state level parties. In 1999, the share of votes polled by regional parties shows an increase. While BJP polled 23.5 per cent votes, its regional allies polled 18 per

cent votes. The regional allies of Congress polled 5 per cent votes. Other regional parties polled more than 15 per cent votes. Thus, if we look at the votes polled by all-India parties and state level parties, their vote share is almost 60:40. The rise in the vote share of regional and state level parties is mainly due to the broad range of alliances forged by BJP with various parties since 1998. In 1998 the BJP had allied with 15 regional parties, while in 1999 it allied with 19 regional parties. This also indicates that since 1998 most regional parties have been gravitating towards BJP in contrast to the situation in 1996.

### *Areas of Influence*

Let us look at the areas in which regional parties are predominant. In the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh (MP) regional parties do not have much presence. Gujarat had two small breakaway groups originating in the splits in Janata Dal and BJP. But both were short-lived and finally gave way to a bipolar contest between Congress and BJP. Karnataka has a potential for regionalized politics since the two JD factions together garner a quarter of the votes. Finally, politics in Kerala is neatly divided between the two fronts, Left Front and United Democratic Front. In both these alliances smaller state level parties are important partners but Congress and the Communist parties dominate politics.

In terms of seat share, regional parties dominate nine states since half of the MPs from these states belong to regional parties. These include the smaller states of Manipur, Meghalaya and Sikkim. Besides these, other states in this category are Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Maharashtra, Haryana, and Jammu and Kashmir. Another test of the prominence of regional parties would be their vote share. In thirteen states, regional parties had thirty per cent or more share of the votes in 1999 election. They include the smaller states mentioned above. In Manipur and Sikkim, regional parties polled 67 and 95 per cent votes respectively. Other states where regional parties polled around thirty per cent or more votes are J&K, Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra, AP, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, W. Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. In Tamil Nadu, various regional parties together polled 75 per cent votes. In Maharashtra and Andhra, regional parties polled 44 and 42 per cent votes respectively. The vote share of regional parties in W. Bengal, Punjab, Orissa and Haryana was between 33 and 35 per cent in the 1999 elections while in other states regional parties polled between 29 and 31 per cent votes. Considering multipolarity of electoral contests, this performance is certainly impressive.

Even before the rise of regional parties during the nineties, regional parties dominated state level politics in many states. Apart from the states of northeast, politics in J&K, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Orissa had witnessed rise of regional parties at the state level. The National Conference has been central to politics in J&K. In Punjab, the role of Akali Dal was limited till 1966. Since then, however, Punjab politics has revolved around Akali politics. The Akalis established themselves politically by winning 43 of 104 seats in the legislative election of 1969. Similarly, DMK rose to prominence in 1962 Assembly elections winning 50 seats. It came to power in 1967 with 138 seats. The AIADMK replaced the DMK in 1977. Thus, Tamil politics has been regionalised since 1962. Although Orissa

has now joined the group of states dominated by regional politics, regional political parties between 1952 to and 1975 earlier dominated the state. The Ganatantra Parishad won 31,51 and 36 seats in 1952, 1957 and 1961 Assembly elections respectively. Later the Jan Congress won 26 seats in 1967, Utkal Congress won 33 seats in 1971 and 35 in 1974. The two regional parties, Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and United Goan Party (UGP), too, dominated goan politics. Local parties of Karnataka had captured 41 seats along with independents in the state legislature in 1967 while local parties of AP won 70 seats along with independents. The Forward Block and RSP together won 22, 13 and 33 seats in the West Bengal Assembly in 1962,1967 and 1969 respectively. The eighties saw the rise of the AGP in Assam and TDP in Andhra. To sum up, regional parties dominated state level politics in many states in the pre-1990 period.

### ***Ideological Positions***

A variety of regionalist and / or non- regional ideological positions are taken by the regionalist and state-based parties. Many such parties are personalistic and centered around one leader. Yet, formation of a party requires an ideological location even if it is only like a fig- leaf as far as legitimization of the party's existence is concerned. Besides, the compulsions of electoral politics force a party into presenting some arguments. The regional parties frequently combine the regionalist and non- regional arguments in order to explain their *raison d'être* to the electorate.

Regional parties extend a broad range of regionalist arguments. These surround invocation of regional pride and marks of regional identity. Regional arguments involve demands pertaining to regional culture, history and language. The demands for formation of state or inclusion of certain territories into a state are potent weapons of mobilization. Yet another aspect of regional ideology is the demand for more autonomy to the state. Such demands are posed as opposition to the role of governor, to art. 356, etc. Finally, regionalist ideological position takes the form of demands for state's development. Such regionalism deals less with issues of identity and more with issues of backwardness, investment and industrial progress. Regional parties variously use these arguments- identity, statehood, autonomy and development-. The National Conference, Akali Dal, DMK, often combine identity and autonomy arguments. Parties like Biju Janata Dal (BJD) or Trinmul Congress (TC) emphasize the development arguments. The TDP emerged on the basis of identity argument but Chandrababu Naidu has led the party quietly to the development argument. Many parties originate in the demand for statehood. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Chhatisgarh Mukti Morcha, Vishal Haryana Parishad, are examples of parties demanding statehood. Most parties of the northeast continue to combine identity issue with autonomy or statehood demands. By invoking regionalist arguments, a regional party can easily identify with the different sections in the regional society. Its language of identity appeals to the intelligentsia and the masses alike. Besides, identity discourse also benefits the materially dominant sections of the society.

However it is not always necessary that a regional party would confine itself only to regionalist arguments. Regional parties cover Many times non-regionalist ideological ground. While the Akalis tend to define regional identity in terms of religion, the Shiv Sena uses the two ideologies of regionalism and religious communalism according to exigencies of electoral politics. Regional parties also rely on caste for their ideological formulations. Thus, the DMK originally combined Dravidian identity with non-Brahminism. By employing anti-caste ideological resources, the DMK strengthened its claims pertaining to a separate Dravid identity vis-à-vis the Aryans. More recently, the PMK in Tamil Nadu has also combined the regional rhetoric with an anti-caste social position on behalf of the OBCs. Such ideological formulations should not be seen cynically only as marriages of convenience. There is also a broader implication involved in such formulations. They tend to restate the meaning of 'regional' identity. Thus, the Akali claim implies that the Punjabi identity is not merely a territorial and linguistic identity. Being a Punjabi is implicitly equated with being a Sikh also. Similarly, the Shiv Sena keeps on shifting its rhetoric from Maharashtrian pride to Hindu pride. It believes that there is no contradiction between these two identities. On the other hand, the latter is the extension of the former. The symbol of Shivaji employed by Shiv Sena embodies both these ideological assertions. Shivaji – a seventeenth century Maratha chief- is portrayed both as savior of 'Marathi' pride and protector of Hindutva. The Dravid parties – particularly the DMK, originally – also defined the regional identity in the context of two factors. Firstly, the regional identity was defined in terms of the juxtaposition between outsiders-aggressor vs. indigenous pride; i.e., the Aryans vs. Dravids. Secondly, it was claimed that Dravid identity belongs to masses-the non-Brahmans. Thus, regionalist ideology disinherited the Brahmins from Dravidian legacy. If regionalism is exclusionary in the sense that it excludes persons belonging to other regions then, some regionalist formulations involve a double exclusion: of outsiders and exclusion of certain (religious, social or caste) communities (and by implication, inclusion of insiders and certain communities).

Some state-based parties employ only the second variety of exclusion / inclusion. There are parties, which seldom explicitly rely on regionalist exclusion. Instead, the primary locus of exclusion/inclusion is caste/community/tribe. Secondly, because the principle of exclusion / inclusion has a regionally specified political salience, the party becomes a single state party. Although examples of such parties are more prominent in the late eighties and nineties, regional parties did exist earlier also which did not rely on regionalist ideology. The Republican Party of India was conceived as an all-India party. But it operated in the framework of exclusion/inclusion on the basis of caste. In the late fifties, Dalit mobilization on such basis, could take place only in Maharashtra. So the party became confined to Maharashtra. This same constraint impinges growth of BSP outside the typical context of U.P. More recently, in 1993, the Bahujan Mahasangh (BMS) has emerged in Maharashtra as a party of OBCs favouring Dalit-OBC cooperation and unity. But the more dramatic examples of this type of parties are those of Samajwadi Party (SP) and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). Both aspire to be national i.e., all-India parties. Both are non-regionalist in their ideology. They

have reached the regional station through the caste-route of exclusion/inclusion. In principle, the ideology of OBC uplift can have all-India applicability. But these parties have defined their ideological positions in the specific context of their respective states. As a result, their ideology is translated into ideology of the upwardly mobile OBC communities. The rhetoric of protecting the minorities too, does not attract people outside of U. P.; nor does Laloo's rhetoric about Advani's ignorance about milking the cow appeal to OBCs outside of Bihar! In other words, the meaning of pro-OBC ideology becomes state-specific in the case of Bahujan Mahasangh of Maharashtra, Samajwadi Party of U. P or RJD of Bihar. Yet it is undeniable that these parties cover a very significant ideological terrain. Caste and Tribe exist both at all-India level and at the state level. An ideology based on those factors may claim all-India status but such ideology becomes relevant and meaningful only in specific contexts. Discussion of peasantry castes has to pin down whether we are talking about middle castes like Jats, Marathas, etc. or if we are talking about peasant OBCs like Yadavs or Malis, etc. This peculiarity often forces anti-caste parties into state-specific or regionalized positions. Perhaps, this characteristic of anti-caste ideology may continue until the gap between caste-specific identity and supra-caste mega-identities (like Dalits, OBCs, Bahujan) is filled or overcome. Till then, caste ideology will keep on regionalizing the forces claiming anti-caste space.

## II

### *Social Bases of Regional Parties*

We noted earlier that initially after the rise of regional parties in 1996, politics appeared to be becoming triangular. Since the Congress and BJP entered into a competition in many states, observers felt that a bipolar situation was about to emerge<sup>3</sup>. The growth of regional parties also upset the established patterns of voter preferences. Not only new segments of voters were ushered into the electoral arena but traditional loyalties too, were put under strain. The regional parties succeeded in mobilizing greater share of votes. Congress was the obvious loser in most states; notably in Andhra, Assam, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. While this description is factually accurate, it captures only one aspect of the reality. The other aspect is fragmentation of non-Congress and non-BJP votes. This has happened in Bihar, Karnataka and U.P. where the so-called Janata Dal was divided into regional fragments.

The third aspect of the political reality was readiness of regional parties to enter into alliances with BJP rather than with the Congress. Since most of the regional parties had a tradition of anti-Congressism and a social base, which was mobilized on a non-Congress ideological basis, these parties were constrained in choosing electoral allies. This electoral arithmetic produced two results. Firstly, by aligning with BJP, these regional parties made it possible for the BJP to take over state power. Secondly and more importantly, alliance with BJP signalled new social equations. For instance, Lok Shakti practically facilitated entry of BJP into Karnataka in 1998 by breaking the Lingayat and Vokkaliga axis. It isolated the

Vokkaligas and turned the Lingayats towards BJP<sup>4</sup>. Samata Party in the case of Bihar accomplished almost a similar task. In Maharashtra, the NCP went ahead with the consolidation of Marathas in 1999 and facilitated the efforts of BJP-Shiv Sena to garner OBC votes<sup>5</sup>. In this background, it becomes interesting to locate the exact social territory occupied by different regional parties in their respective states. Below, we present a summary of the social base of the major regional parties based on the National Election Study (NES) 1999 conducted by the CSDS. The trends presented here are from post-election survey.

### ***Akali Dal***

Active and central to Punjab political scene since the mid-sixties, the Akali Dal has forged a social base of rural peasantry of Punjab. Almost three fourth of its supporters come from the rural population. The party draws support from diverse sections in terms of caste and community. However, more than half of its votes are from the Sikh community. A sizable proportion (43 per cent) of OBCs support the Akali Dal accounting for 20 per cent of its votes. The social base of Akali Dal is marked by weak support from Dalits. The party draws equal support from men and women. Since the Akali Dal is a well-established regional party of Punjab, it has a slight edge among middle aged (36-45yrs) voters but the party is not exactly popular among young voters (up to 35 years of age). It may be conjectured that being part of establishment, the party is not popular both among the young as well as the elderly voters. Another interesting feature of Akali support base is that it has weak support both among illiterates and those with higher education. Bulk of its support comes from the primary and matric educated voters.(Table.No.4)

### ***AIADMK and DMK***

Politics in Tamil Nadu has been exclusively region-based since mid-sixties. From 1989 the Dravid parties have realized that they can make and unmake national governments. This has changed their perception entirely. Now the two Dravid parties simultaneously adopt a nationalistic and all-India stance as well as revert to shrill regionalist rhetoric. The former is necessary to assert an all-India role while the latter is required to prove that they have not lost sight of their original ideological position. In the case of DMK, observers have noted a drift towards pan-Indian nationalism. As a balancing act, the DMK also initiated Tamil prayers (archanas) in temples in the place of Sanskrit prayers. This move has helped in the Hinduisation of the Tamil culture. Not surprisingly, this move by the DMK was supported by the non-Brahman Saivites who are staunch Hindus<sup>6</sup>. The AIADMK has generally been silent on the question of the non-Brahman legacy of Dravid movement. During AIADMK rule, Tamil Nadu witnessed the spread of Vinayak cult.

In this sense both DMK and AIADMK traverse an identical ideological space. It appears from survey data that both parties have weak base among the younger voters.(Table No.5). But in most other respects the parties are dissimilar. DMK has equal support among men and women while AIADMK is more popular among the



women voters. The DMK has strong base in urban sections and educated voters while AIADMK is popular among rural and less educated voters. Two thirds of AIADMK voters are either educated upto primary level or not literate at all. Interestingly, large chunk of DMK support comes from upper castes and OBCs; while AIADMK is dependent on OBCs and SCs. Thus, the two parties appear to be leading two different social coalitions in Tamil Nadu.

### *Biju Janata Dal*

Non-Congress politics in Orissa has often been based around localized forces. Although the Swatantra party played an important role in state politics between 1967 and 1972, formulation of government depended upon Gan Congress (1967-1971) and Utkal Congress and Jharkhand Party (1971-72)<sup>7</sup>. It has been argued that the middle class-upper castes nature of the Oriya political elites has contributed to the consolidation of region-based politics in Orissa<sup>8</sup>. Even when Nandini Satpathy or Biju Patnaik chose to participate in non-Congress politics at the all-India level, their state-level politics continued to be anchored in a regional discourse. The Janata Dal unit of Orissa under Biju Patnaik always functioned independently. It belonged to the all-India party primarily in order to pave the way for the regional leader to enter the national political arena. The JD unit in the state quickly disintegrated after the death of Biju Patnaik and gave way to the formation of a state-level party under the leadership of Navin Patnaik who promptly aligned with BJP. This decision was based on two considerations. One was the logic of anti-Congressism, which drove Navin Patnaik towards BJP. The other was an aspiration to play a role at the all-India level. With the demise of United Front, a regional party could gain access to national centre of power only by aligning with BJP. Navin Patnaik has thus consolidated anti-Congress politics in the state with himself (his party) as the main nucleus of anti-Congressism. However, it is suggested by observers that in long run, BJP might undermine the position of BJD as the locus of anti-Congress politics in Orissa<sup>9</sup>.

In order to appreciate the type of social base, which the BJD enjoys, it may be repeated that the party speaks less of regional pride. Instead, BJD places emphasis on Orissa's backwardness. At the same time, the party posed itself as opposed to Congress misrule and corruption. Its theme of anti-Congressism combined with state's progress must have been appealing to the middle class voters. While maintaining an overall gender balance, BJD successfully attracts slightly more women than men. The party has greater support among the middle age (36-45) voters compared to other age groups. But, on the whole, the party draws balanced support from voters of all age groups. The BJD has good support among urban voters (43 per cent). Its supporters comprise of large sections of illiterates and the well-educated voters. This combination is perhaps well explained by the caste composition of BJD voters. More than half of its voters come from upper castes and a quarter comes from the OBCs. In contrast, BJD has a weak base among SCs (25 per cent SCs support BJD) and a non-existent base among Orissa's tribal population. (Table No.6).

### ***RJD and Samata***

Both Rashtriya Janata Dal and Samata Party are Bihar-based parties. Both had a common origin in the Janata Dal. While RJD has been a strong exponent of the advancement of OBCs, the Samata Party relied heavily on anti-Laloo campaign, which talked of good governance. It also opposed corruption. The Samata Party was one of the earliest allies of BJP (barring Shiv Sena) since 1996 onwards. It is well known that the party enjoys the support of Bihar's peasant OBC community, the Kurmis. Laloo Prasad's RJD came into being in 1998 but even before that, the Bihar unit of the Janata Dal was practically autonomous. In 1999, RJD had an alliance with Congress. But the Bihar state unit of the Congress was not very enthusiastic about this alliance. Laloo Prasad forged an invincible coalition of OBCs, Muslims and SCs of Bihar. However, he and the RJD have not been able to concretize the support of the OBCs. The leadership of Laloo Prasad has been identified with a disproportionate rise of the Yadav community. The RJD is seen as primarily a Yadav party with the support of Yadavs who account for around 11 percent of state's population.

The nineties have been generally seen as the decade of political upheavals marked by shifting political base. Very few parties were able in this period to retain a steady share of the electorate. The RJD has successfully retained the core of its base during this period. The charges of being an exclusively Yadav party notwithstanding, its support base has been fairly diverse. For instance, in 1999 elections, RJD drew balanced support from voters of different age groups and educational groups. It received only relatively higher support from voters in the age groups of 46 year and above and less from younger voters. Also, contrary to the general impression, the RJD receives larger support from the educated voters than it receives from the illiterates. Less women vote for RJD compared to its male supporters and its support among urban voters is higher than among rural voters: while almost 17 per cent rural voters supported the RJD in 1999, 32 per cent urban voters voted for the party. In terms of community, the RJD's base is comprised of Yadavs, Muslims, Low OBCs and SCs. Although, some erosion did take place in the support base of RJD across various social sections, survey data for 1998 elections also show a similar pattern of OBC, Muslim and SC support to RJD<sup>10</sup>. It may be further noted that almost one third of RJD voters still come from lower OBC community. (Table No.7)

Samata Party, on the other hand, seems to have benefited from its alliance with the BJP. Voters of Samata Party constitute a combination of Rajputs and Upper castes (who together account for 30 per cent of Samata votes) apart from lower OBCs (one third of Samata votes). Thus, it is a combination of upper and lower castes. Interestingly, 65 percent Rajputs and almost 40 per cent upper castes voters vote for Samata Party. In terms of political identification, this means that voters of upper castes do not perceive Samata Party as OBC party like Laloo's RJD. Samata Party draws more support from rural voters than urban voters. Yet, like RJD, Samata Party, too, is slightly more popular among male voters. Its voters come mainly from the age group of 26 years to 45 years. In terms of education,

Samata Party's base is fairly spread across different groups. It draws somewhat more support from the voters having education up to matric level: over 33 per cent votes from this category vote for the Samata Party. All these features of the support base of Samata Party have remained stable over a period of time since the same findings were noted in 1995 also<sup>11</sup>.

### ***Samajwadi Party***

Like RJD, the Samajwadi Party originated from the Janata Dal. Since its base could not expand beyond U.P., this party has been identified as state-based party. The S.P. has made efforts to carve out a base for itself in Maharashtra relying upon the Hindi speaking population of Mumbai and the Muslims in Mumbai. In the politics of Mumbai city this party has played a significant role in the nineties. In Uttar Pradesh, Samajwadi Party is seen as a party of Yadavs and Muslims. Since the BSP captures a large section of U.P's Dalit votes, expansion of SP has been halted. However, like the RJD, success of Samajwadi Party lies in the fact that in UP's turbulent political waters, this party has more or less retained its base during the nineties. Just as there has been a keen tussle between BSP and SP for UP's Dalit voters, the BJP and SP are engaged in a battle for OBC votes in Uttar Pradesh. The BJP has been trying to forge an alliance of upper castes and lower OBCs in UP. Mulayam Singh on the other hand, seeks to unite the OBCs under Yadav leadership. The Samajwadi Party gets more support among the young voters below 25 years and among voters of 36-45 years age group. Over sixty per cent of its voters are men. Moderately educated voters (with only primary education) support the SP more than both illiterates and voters with higher education. The Samajwadi Party is more popular among urban voters compared to rural voters. Its voters comprise of Yadavs, OBCs and Muslims. Almost two-third Yadav voters support the SP, while 37 per cent Muslims and 18 per cent OBCs support this party.(Table No.8). Thus, the SP has a very strong Yadav association. Both in the case of SP and RJD, there is room to conjecture that they are supported by those sections of the backward communities who have now become upwardly mobile.

### ***Shiv Sena and NCP***

For long, politics in Maharashtra was dominated by the Congress. Regional parties like PWP, RPI and even Shiv Sena did not matter much. Ironically, Shiv Sena shot into prominence after it underplayed its regionalism and projected itself as a Hindu party. Yet, Shiv Sena identifies itself with 'Marathi' people in the Mumbai-Thane-Konkan region. Outside this region, this party does not invoke regionalism. In the nineties, Shiv Sena emerged as a militant Hindu party of moderately educated youth from both Maratha caste and OBCs. In 1995, when Shiv Sena came to power in the state alongwith BJP, it had the support of 17 per cent voters from Maratha-Kunbi caste cluster. The party has consolidated this base over a period of time and added to it a valuable section of OBC voters. In 1998, the party had almost 30 per cent support among the OBCs. All through this period, the base of

Shiv Sena consists of illiterates and less educated voters<sup>12</sup>. Some slight changes were observed in the survey of 1999. There is a gender balance among Sena's supporters. Similarly, Shiv Sena draws a balanced support from rural and urban voters. Young voters (up to 25 years of age) and voters in the 46-55 age group constitute the main supporters of Sena. Secondly, matriculate and college educated voters dominate Sena's supporters. Over the last five years Shiv Sena continues to receive support from Marathas (25 per cent), Kunbis (20 per cent) and OBCs (34 per cent).

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) has a strong base in Maharashtra. The social composition of NCP's base is somewhat comparable to that of Shiv Sena.(Table No.9). Although the NCP was formed with a view to dividing Congress all over the country, Sharad Pawar succeeded in only dividing the Congress in Maharashtra. Pawar was already a leader of breakaway Congress party in Maharashtra between 1980 and 1986. It appears that he has retained his following. In 1999, NCP received balanced support from voters of various age groups. The party was supported more by women, rural voters and illiterates. In terms of caste, there was a keen competition between NCP and Shiv Sena for Maratha, Kunbi and OBC votes. Almost one third of NCP voters were Marathas. The main difference between NCP and Shiv Sena was that the former got sizable support from SCs and Muslims. More than 20 per cent Dalits and 30 per cent Muslims voted for NCP. Since 47 per cent of NCP voters are from the Maratha-Kunbi community, the party can be identified as party of the Maratha-Kunbis of Maharashtra. Like Lok Shakti in Karnataka, NCP seems to have played an important role in formalizing the fragmentation of Maratha-Kunbi vote bloc in Maharashtra.

### *Telugu Desam*

It may not be an exaggeration to say that TDP marks the beginning of the present era of prominence of regional parties. The TDP has successfully polarized Andhra politics between itself and the Congress. In the nineties the party assumed a significant role at the all-India level. In order to retain that position, Chandrababu Naidu swiftly switched over to the National Democratic Alliance from the United Front. The TDP, right from its inception, has proved to be a rallying point for Andhra's peasant OBCs although it does not invoke the ideology of OBC uplift. As a result of N. T. Rama Rao's (NTR) charismatic appeal and populist policies, TDP earned popularity among the poor, rural voters, especially among women. It was also supported by SCs and OBCs<sup>13</sup>. It has been further observed that the original social coalition forged by NTR incorporated middle peasants and the middle class from backward castes; but by 1998, while the party electorally assuaged the backward castes, some poor and backward caste voters shifted to BJP<sup>14</sup>. The alienation of OBCs from the Congress since early 1980s has been observed by students of Andhra politics<sup>15</sup> and this has been accounted for by the pro-Harijan policies of Congress<sup>16</sup>. However, TDP's strong regional developmentalist argument and the following it received, can be understood only in the context of rise of the peasant OBCs- the Kammas. By 1980, this section had

attained crucial amount of economic power and control over state's economy. That is why, in the first place, the appeal of regionalism worked with this section and in the second place, Chandrababu Naidu's technology-savvy policy also appealed to this section.

It is remarkable that the TDP has more or less retained the earlier composition of its social base in spite of the policy shift effected by Chandrababu Naidu. Its voters are evenly spread among different age groups. Although, slightly more women voters vote for TDP than men, there is no gender imbalance in its base. Its base is predominantly rural. Less than thirty per cent urban voters support the TDP. Less educated and illiterate voters extend greater support to TDP than the well educated. As has been observed earlier, over 70 per cent Kamma voters support the TDP. However, the secret of TDP success does not lie in this Kamma support alone. Substantial support among tribals and very large support among peasant OBCs accounts for the electoral success of Telugu Desam. In fact, TDP would be more dependant upon OBC voters in general than on Kamma votes alone (Table No.10). There is room to surmise that the regionalist identity and a strong developmentalist policy appeals to the upwardly mobile rural sections that have acquired domination only recently. In comparison, the support of SCs has declined in 1999 in comparison to the NTR period.

### *Trinmul Congress*

Since the Left Front has been the ruling front in West Bengal since late seventies, politics in the state revolves around Left and anti-Left poles. It has been further observed that success of Left Front is attributable to the typically Bengali identity acquired and nurtured by Left parties. In this sense, politics in West Bengal had already become regionalised. Strident anti-Left agitation by one section of state Congress further contributed to this regionalization. The Congress in West Bengal was divided between two factions, one trying to associate with the all-India perception of politics leading to anti-BJP strategy (effectively meaning soft approach to Left Front) and another faction rooting its politics firmly in the trajectory of state level politics which led to a tacit understanding with BJP<sup>17</sup>. The Trinmul Congress emerged from this scenario in 1997. Although the new party did not enter into an alliance with BJP-it had only seat adjustment in 1998- the Trinmul Congress finally allied with BJP in 1999. The Trinmul Congress draws heavily on Bengali nationalism but identifies itself with minorities and poorer sections of the state. It has been observed that in contrast to Bhadrak politics of CPI (M), Trinmul's plebian politics attracts the voters on the social and economic fringe<sup>18</sup>. Survey data show that more men vote for Trinmul than women (which is contradictory to the 'Didi' image of Mamata Banerjee among women). Secondly, the larger support to the party comes from voters in the age group of 26 to 35 years. In fact, Trinmul draws relatively less support from the middle-aged and elderly voters. The educational profile of its supporters is fairly balanced, though it has slightly higher level of support in the group with education up to matriculation. In spite of reverses, which the Trinmul Congress handed out to the LF support in rural areas and in contrast to its plebian image, 44 per cent of its supporters come

from upper castes. Although Trinmul has reasonably good support among SCs and OBCs, support among the Muslims is quite weak. (Table No.11)

### III

The foregoing sections show that regional parties employ various ideological arguments and draw support from different sections from state to state. BJP's allies broadly receive support from a combination of upper castes and lower castes while most opponents of BJP have a strong base among upwardly mobile peasant castes (often peasant OBCs) and Dalits. However, these differences are overshadowed by the crucial role played by regional parties during the nineties. Regional parties existed earlier also. But they often confined their role to state politics. In contrast, the rise of regional parties in post-1990 period is marked by their central role in national level politics. So much so, that some regional parties first became active in all-India politics and then entered the arena of state politics. Lok Shakti, Biju Janata Dal, Trinmul Congress are examples of this pattern. Thus, it is the role of parties in national level politics that has been attracting comment. In one more respect, the regional parties of yester years are different from the post-1990 period. Earlier, most regional parties could be explained in terms of regional sentiments (linguistic state, etc.) and /or in terms of local splinter groups of national parties, notably Congress. Whenever a local or state level faction got a raw deal in the party, that faction would start functioning as a separate regional party- till a time it was accommodated in some larger or national party. But the rise of regional parties in the nineties has been on such a scale that amalgamation of regional parties with national parties does not seem to be feasible. As a result, the political actors have been forced to develop coalition strategies whereby they enter into alliances with a view to retaining their respective existences separately. Besides, regional parties from different states, too, cannot forge a grand federal alliance. Such alliance appears attractive on paper and may even be workable at the national level but each state has different sets of political compulsions forcing regional parties to align with national parties rather than with each other. It is necessary therefore, to situate the phenomenon of regional parties (and overall regionalization of politics) in the context of changes in the electoral – party system, the evolution of Indian democracy and the political economy in the post-emergency period.

#### *Competing Frameworks of Politics*

Since the decline of the Congress system, at least two competing frameworks of politics have been trying to hold the middle ground that was hitherto occupied by Congress party. These are the framework of backward caste politics and the framework of majoritarian politics of Hindu communalism. This competition

momentarily displaced the emphasis on anti-Congressism and gave way to the 'third space' discourse. From the neat division of politics into Congress and Opposition, political configuration became complex. The capital 'O' in opposition disappeared. Now, politics involved three options: anti-Congress, anti-BJP and opposition to both Congress and BJP. Besides, the politics of backward castes presented with two possibilities. The backward castes could be accommodated in either Congress or BJP. Alternatively, the backward castes could remain autonomous and redefine the terms of politics. It is in this sense that the increase in the numerical choices available to voters<sup>19</sup> also implies a qualitative change. One qualitative change involved the availability of differentiated sets of alternatives, just as anti-Congress alternative in the form of BJP was also available. Similarly, two OBC party alternatives in the form of Samata and RJD became available while a similar option existed in the case of anti-BJP politics also.

Another qualitative change is related to the nature of electoral mobilizations. The competition among Congress framework, BJP framework and Caste framework produced opportunities for sharply focussed mobilizations. Mobilization around single issue, single social section, etc. became possible. Thus, a new space for mobilization emerged in terms of exclusivist mobilization<sup>20</sup>. More importantly, this mobilization entered the arena of national level politics and became relevant there. One obvious implication of these developments was that the theater for defining the boundaries of political contestations often turned out to be the state. Whether a party will be only anti-Congress or also anti-BJP depended upon the state level configuration of forces rather than on national level exigencies or ideological positions. Thus, both Trinmul Congress and TDP have reasons to claim their secular credentials openly. And yet they cannot be part of the anti-communal front any more. In the case of Trinmul, its anti-communalism is circumscribed by the fact that Left Front holds the central position in the anti-communal politics in the state. Thus, while LF represents anti-communal Left politics, Trinmul represents anti-Left secular politics in West Bengal. In Andhra, TDP hopes to occupy anti-Congress secular space while in UP, Mulayam Singh aspires to occupy secular, OBC and anti-Congress space. This situation constitutes the political background in which many regional and state level parties have emerged in the 1990s.

Since the Congress held the middle ground in most states (except Tamil Nadu where it did not and West Bengal where it shared this space with Left Front), state level parties in almost all the states follow the anti-Congress frame of reference. Thus, anti-Congressism may be seen as a common feature of majority of regional parties. Besides, the emerging framework of caste politics supplied additional strength to the anti-Congress stand. The claim of various peasant OBC castes in different states directly challenged the Congress because the latter was instrumental in retaining the political hold of upper castes and rich peasant castes. However, the caste framework of politics could not generate one all-India vehicle since caste configurations have been state specific. Thus, anti-Congressism and state specific caste equation combined to produce separate state level politics in many parts of the country in the post-1990 period. In a sense, the post-Congress polity, is witnessing a fundamental contestation over the middle ground. Students

of Indian politics have already noted the difficulty involved in occupying the 'middle space' in national politics<sup>21</sup>. What needs to be emphasized however, is the fact that 'middle ground' is itself in the process of being redefined. Whereas the Congress system shaped the middle ground by constantly negotiating the various social cleavages, the caste framework as also the BJP framework sought to redefine what constitutes the middle space. The rise of Dalits and OBCs has forced parties to claim that sharpening of social cleavages rather than their negotiation, constitutes the middle ground. This has further inspired exclusivist parties and focussed on the states as theater of politics. In other words, now there is no single 'middle' ground in Indian politics, there are multiple middle grounds specific to various states and they have been defined or invented in opposition to existing middle spaces in those respective states. The BJP in UP, for instance, has to follow the rules of game as dictated by the newly emergent 'middle space' and incorporate the large OBC contingent within its fold. The regionally understood 'middle space' thus, defines the politics in a state. The regional parties and regionalization of national parties represent this churning.

### *Democratization*

The rise of regional parties is seen by scholars as related to democratization in three respects. It has been argued that the politics in the nineties is characterized by a democratic upsurge involving greater participation by women, tribals, Dalits, lower castes and the rural voters. Regional parties are seen as carries of this democratic upsurge<sup>22</sup>. Secondly, the issue of regional parties is seen in the context of federal polity. It is argued that established opinion has always seen regional parties and regionalism with suspicion because the Congress system of politics placed heavy emphasis on nation as the unit of political action rather than the states. However both on grounds of plurality and democratic principle, federalization of the polity has been seen as a positive development<sup>23</sup>. It is further argued that although regional parties are not self-consciously working in the direction of rewriting centre –state relations, this is precisely what will result from their attempts to diminish center's powers over states<sup>24</sup>. The third dimension is related to the discourse shift taking place in Indian politics. It is said that rise of regional parties suggests that established discourse on nation and nation-building is being challenged. The idea of a homogenized nation and of politics sanitized by excluding the local elements is being effectively challenged by the rise of new localities around which much of contemporary politics is centred<sup>25</sup>. In essence, these arguments tend to posit the regional parties with a democratizing potential and suggest that the rise of regional parties may indicate the possibility of further democratization possible within liberal democratic framework.

It is true that the decline of Congress system has released a number of forces, which contain democratic possibilities. Besides, expansion of the competitive arena opens up politics for new contestations, which were hitherto muted. The rise of regional parties is associated with these developments. On the other hand, it would be unrealistic to expect regional parties to fully or effectively transcend the



characteristics of Indian polity. These characteristics constrain their democratic potentials. The rise of regional parties has effectively put an end to plebiscitary character of elections based on charismatic leadership. This fact has been more than sufficiently underscored by Rajiv Gandhi's defeat, failure of Sonia Gandhi to generate a wave and also failure of BJP in winning elections on the basis of Vajpayee's popularity. Yet, elections continue to be plebiscites regarding state level leaders. Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Harayana, Bihar are examples of this. In fact states where regional parties do not exist or are weak have shown a non-plebiscitary character. Most regional parties derive their electoral strength from the popularity of one leader and there is always an emotional bond between the leader and the electorate. Such a structure of politics allows the leader / party to claim mass support (mandate) *and yet to ignore the expectations in policy formulation.*

Secondly, while regional parties have certainly shifted the 'locale' of political discourse, it is too early to visualize a weak centre. What appears to be possible is that the clout of regional parties will give states a counter to bargain with the centre and wrest some concessions. But the fact that majority of the regional parties are partners in central government also means that there will be limits to the anti-centre demands of regional parties. Thus, 'interlocking' of national system and state party systems<sup>26</sup> may work in both the directions. It may push federalization; it may as well restrict states' anti-center rhetoric. More importantly, almost all the regional parties not only want share in central politics but also do not want to be identified as parochial. This forces them to be magnanimous in their approach to issues of federalism.

This situation warns us against romanticization of regional parties. In terms of structure of politics, new localities have certainly been emerging in the sense suggested by Aditya Nigam<sup>27</sup>. These localities have changed the political idiom. But have they changed-sought to change-the essential characteristics of the political discourse? The dramatic consensus on issues of economic policy involving structural adjustments and on the issue of nuclear option suggests that parties positioning themselves on different 'locales' from national parties, do not necessarily think and act differently. This suggests that parties across the board share a nationalist rhetoric, which makes the issue of locality somewhat weak. The transformation that is taking place lies not so much in the content of discourse but in the participants of that discourse. In a significant shift, newer sections seek to displace those who have thus far monopolized the political discourse.

### ***Political Economy***

How far this shift will affect the polity in the long term will probably depend upon nature of India's political economy. Already, the association between rise of regional parties and economic changes has been noted by scholars. It is argued that as globalization deepens, the role of 'localities' as the sites of political agency and of domination will become more important<sup>28</sup>. Further, it is noted that the shift in power and bargaining leverage from the centre to the states is advanced by the programme of economic liberalization<sup>29</sup>. More specifically, the policy of

liberalization has changed the competitive ability of states to attract fresh investments. Instead of credit flows in the direction of low income status (as in pre-reform period), the high income states have been receiving credit flows since 1994<sup>30</sup>. This trend is going to a) increase the gap between rich and poor states and b) increase the clout of rich states in policy making. Thus, one can predict the economic status of a state along with the decline of Congress in order to measure the role of regional parties. The economic disparity, however, appears a non-factor in explaining existence of regional parties. Just as better-off states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Harayana etc. have strong regional parties, low-income states like Bihar, U.P, Orissa, too have their regional parties. Thus, instead of working as one 'bloc' of state-based parties, regional parties will be divided among themselves on the issue of federal structure and the content of liberalization policy.

Within the overall context of contradiction thrown up by process of liberalization, one has to take note of the rise of new sections among the ruling classes and the response of ruling classes to the democratization that has been taking place. Both these developments can be located in the post-emergency period. Looking specifically at the example of Andhra Pradesh, Srinivasulu has argued that emergence of rich peasant class in the aftermath of green revolution as the junior partner in the ruling class is a crucial development. This class is favorably disposed to the available ideological reserve contained in regionalist ideology<sup>31</sup>. The rise of this new section of ruling class is accompanied by the rise of OBCs as an electoral political force. The former assumed the role of political leadership of this new social force.

I have argued elsewhere that the moment of transformation is often, in the Indian experience, coupled with aspirational coup by emergent sections of ruling classes<sup>32</sup>. The rise of regional parties needs to be seen in this specific context. The eighties and nineties were definitely marked by political assertion of masses. The Dalits and OBCs in terms of caste, but the disprivileged in general, were retaining their stakes in the political process. These democratic claims met with two responses from the political establishment. One, these claims were incorporated within the Hindutva rhetoric. Two, they were locally digested in the twin polemic of regional pride and regional development. Both these responses were effectively worked out by the new middle classes, which have placed themselves in the forefront of politics in the nineties. The middle classes endorsed the Hindutva rhetoric and they also provided the rationale for regionalism. In this context we also need to note that the social composition of the middle classes is changing to include rural sections and OBCs. This is how the democratic upsurge can be usurped by the ruling classes through the middle class.

The processes of liberalization and globalization of the Indian economy have upset the balance within the ruling classes. While these processes have underscored the overall ascendance of capitalism, the new dispensation has brought into the picture at least three players. One is metropolitan capital both in the form of multi-nationals and global financial companies. These have threatened or reduced to a secondary place the Indian bourgeoisie. The other is enterprising sections among the rich peasants who are turning to capitalist farming and exports.

This new section is vociferously pro-development in the sense of regional development. The third player within the ruling classes is the middle class. Its rural component has excellent equation with rich peasant class and the urban component has favorable predisposition towards metropolitan capital.

Coupled with the decline of Congress, this new set of the political economy presents the ruling classes with a fundamental problem. On the one hand, it is necessary to give political share to rich peasant and middle classes and on the other hand, the economic policies need to be legitimated. This requires new political instrumentalities. With the BJP not yet being able to fulfill both the above tasks, regional parties will be expected to function as the mechanism routing new elites to places of power and shaping local mandates for the advance of economic restructuring. Paradoxical though it may seem, regional parties have been and are going to be both agencies of legitimizing domination and sites of democratization. The contradiction inherent in this duality of their roles is the defining factor in their careers.

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*\*The author wishes to gratefully acknowledge the help of Sanjay Kumar and CSDS Data Unit.*



Table. No. 1

## Regional Parties in Lok Sabha: 1952-1971

| Party   | 1952 | 1957 | 1962 | 1967 | 1972 |
|---------|------|------|------|------|------|
| NC      | -    | -    | 1    | -    | -    |
| AD/P    | 4    | -    | 2    | 3    | 1    |
| RRP     | 3    | -    | -    | -    | -    |
| VHP     | -    | -    | -    | -    | 1    |
| HLS     | -    | -    | 1    | -    | -    |
| MGP     | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | -    |
| PWP     | 2    | 4    | -    | -    | -    |
| SCF/RPI | 2    | 6    | 3    | 1    | 1    |
| UG(S)   | -    | -    | -    | 1    | 1    |
| FB      | 1    | 3    | 1    | 2    | 2    |
| RSP     | 2    | 1    | 2    | 1    | 3    |
| KC      | -    | -    | -    | -    | 3    |
| ML      | -    | -    | -    | -    | 2    |
| MML     | 1    | -    | -    | -    | -    |
| TNT     | 1    | -    | -    | -    | -    |
| CW      | 3    |      |      |      |      |
| TTC     | 1    |      |      |      |      |
| DMK     | -    | 2    | -    | 25   | 22   |
| PDF     | 7    | -    | -    | -    | -    |
| TPS     | -    | -    | -    | -    | 10   |
| GP      | -    | 7    | -    | -    | -    |
| UC      | -    | -    | -    | -    | 1    |
| JKP/D   | 3    | 7    | 1    | -    | 1    |
| CSJ     | -    | 3    | -    | -    | -    |
| BC      | -    | -    | -    | -    | 1    |
| AGP     | 5    | -    | -    | -    | -    |
| APHLC   | -    | -    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| EITU    | -    | 1    | -    | -    | -    |
| UFN     | -    | -    | -    | -    | 1    |
| NNO     | -    | -    | -    | 1    |      |
| TOTAL   | 35   | 34   | 13   | 36   | 51   |

Source: Compiled from Singh V.B., Elections in India: Data Handbook on Lok Sabha Elections: 1986-1991, Sage, New Delhi, 1994.

Table. No. 2

## Regional Parties in Lok Sabha: 1977-1989

| Party  | 1977 | 1980 | 1984 | 1989 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|
| NC     | 2    | 3    | 3    | 3    |
| AD     | 9    | 1    | 7    | 6    |
| PWP    | 5    | -    | 1    | -    |
| SS     | -    | -    | -    | 4    |
| RPI    | 2    | -    | -    | -    |
| MGP    | 1    | 1    | -    | 1    |
| CS     | -    | -    | 3    | 1    |
| IUML   | 2    | 3    | 2    | 2    |
| KC     | 2    | 1    | 2    | 1    |
| RSP    | 4    | 4    | 3    | 4    |
| DMK    | 1    | 16   | 2    | -    |
| AIADMK | 19   | 2    | 12   | 11   |
| TDP    | -    | -    | 30   | 2    |
| MIM    | -    | -    | 1    | 1    |
| JKP    | 1    | -    | -    | -    |
| JMM    | -    | -    | -    | 3    |
| CJ     | -    | 1    | 1    | -    |
| IPF    | -    | -    | -    | 1    |
| GNLF   | -    | -    | -    | 1    |
| FB     | 3    | 3    | 2    | 3    |
| SKJP   | -    | 1    | -    | -    |
| SSP    | -    | -    | -    | 1    |
| AGP    | -    | -    | 7    | -    |
| TOTAL  | 51   | 36   | 76   | 45   |

Source: Compiled from Singh; 1994.



Table. No. 3

## Regional Parties in Lok Sabha : 1991-1999

| Party    | 1991 | 1996 | 1998 | 1999    |
|----------|------|------|------|---------|
| NC       | -    | 3    | 2    | 4       |
| HVC      | -    | -    | 1    | 1       |
| AD*      | -    | 8    | 9    | 3       |
| HVP      | 1    | 3    | 1    | -       |
| INLD/HLD | -    | -    | 4    | 5       |
| JDG      | 1    | -    | -    | -       |
| SS       | 4    | 15   | 6    | 15      |
| PWP      | -    | -    | 1    | 1       |
| RPI*     | -    | -    | 4    | 2       |
| NCP      | -    | -    | -    | 7       |
| MGP      | -    | 1    | -    | -       |
| UGDP     | -    | 1    | -    | -       |
| LS       | -    | -    | 3    | 3 (JDU) |
| KCP      | -    | 1    | -    | -       |
| IUML     | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2       |
| KC*      | 1    | 1    | 1    | 2       |
| RSP      | 3    | 5    | 5    | 3       |
| CS       | 1    | -    | -    | -       |
| DMK      | -    | 17   | 6    | 12      |
| AIADMK   | 11   | -    | 18   | 10      |
| TMC      | -    | 20   | 3    | -       |
| PMK      | -    | -    | 4    | 5       |
| MDMK     | -    | -    | 3    | 4       |
| TRC      | -    | -    | 1    | -       |
| JP       | -    | -    | 1    | -       |
| MADMK    | -    | -    | -    | 1       |
| MGRK     | -    | -    | -    | 1       |
| TDP      | 13   | 16   | 12   | 29      |
| MIM      | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1       |
| BJD      | -    | -    | 9    | 10      |
| MPVC     | -    | 2    | -    | -       |
| SP       | -    | 17   | 20   | 26      |
| SJP      | 5    | 1    | 1    | 1       |
| CT       | -    | 4    | -    | -       |

Table No.3 continued

| Party | 1991 | 1996 | 1998 | 1999    |
|-------|------|------|------|---------|
| LC    | -    | -    | -    | 2       |
| LD    | -    | -    | -    | 2       |
| RJD   | -    | -    | 17   | 7       |
| SMP   | -    | 8    | 12   | 17(JDU) |
| JMM   | 5    | 1    | -    | -       |
| TC    | -    | -    | 7    | 8       |
| FB    | 4    | 3    | 2    | 2       |
| SDF   | -    | 1    | 1    | 1       |
| AGP   | 1    | 5    | -    | -       |
| ASDC  | 1    | 1    | 1    | -       |
| UMF   | -    | -    | 1    | -       |
| MSC   | 1    | -    | 1    | 1       |
| AC    | -    | -    | 1    | -       |
| NPC   | 1    | -    | -    | -       |
| TOTAL | 56   | 137  | 161  | 188     |

Source: Compiled from Singh; 1994, India Today; 31 May 1996, Frontline; 3 April, 1998, Frontline, 5 Nov. 1999.

Table No. 4  
 Social Profile of Voters of Akali Dal ( 1999)  
 ( all figures in per centages )

|                               | Share among<br>Akali Voters | Share in Sample |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Age :</b> up to 25 yrs.    | 12.3                        | 14.4            |
| 26-35 yrs.                    | 27.7                        | 32.3            |
| 36-45 yrs.                    | 29.2                        | 21.4            |
| 46-55 yrs.                    | 15.4                        | 15.3            |
| 56 & above                    | 15.4                        | 16.6            |
| <b>Education :</b> Illiterate | 24.6                        | 37.6            |
| Up to primary                 | 27.7                        | 24.9            |
| Up to Matric                  | 30.8                        | 22.7            |
| College &<br>above            | 16.9                        | 14.8            |
| <b>Community:</b> Upper Caste | 13.8                        | 20.1            |
| OBC                           | 20.0                        | 13.1            |
| SC                            | 12.3                        | 16.7            |
| Muslim                        | -                           | 1.7             |
| Others                        | 53.8                        | 28.4            |
| <b>Gender :</b> Male          | 46.2                        | 46.3            |
| Female                        | 53.8                        | 53.7            |
| <b>Locality :</b> Urban       | 27.7                        | 48.9            |
| Rural                         | 72.3                        | 51.9            |

Source : NES ' 99 : CSDS Data Unit

Table. No. 5

## Social Profile of Voters of DMK and AIADMK (1999)

(all figures in per centages )

|                         | Share among DMK Voters | Share among AIADMK Voters | Share in Sample |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Age : up to 25 yrs.     | 18.2                   | 12.8                      | 12.1            |
| 26-35 yrs.              | 29.5                   | 35.8                      | 30.4            |
| 36-45 yrs.              | 22.7                   | 25.7                      | 24.7            |
| 46-55 yrs.              | 13.6                   | 12.2                      | 15.1            |
| 56 & above              | 15.9                   | 13.5                      | 17.8            |
| Education : Illiterate  | 15.9                   | 30.4                      | 28.7            |
| Up to Primary           | 9.1                    | 36.5                      | 30.4            |
| Up to Mtaric            | 45.5                   | 27.0                      | 27.0            |
| College & above         | 29.5                   | 6.1                       | 13.9            |
| Community : Upper Caste | 22.7                   | 1.4                       | 4.6             |
| OBC                     | 56.8                   | 64.2                      | 59.4            |
| SC                      | 4.5                    | 25.0                      | 26.8            |
| Muslims                 | 6.8                    | 6.8                       | 3.7             |
| Others                  | 9.1                    | 2.7                       | 5.6             |
| Gender : Male           | 50.0                   | 45.9                      | 51.6            |
| Female                  | 50.0                   | 54.1                      | 48.4            |
| Locality : Urban        | 95.5                   | 40.5                      | 29.5            |
| <i>Rural</i>            | 4.5                    | 59.5                      | 70.5            |

Source : NES ' 99 : CSDS Data Unit

Table No. 6

## Social Profile of Voters of BJD (1999)

(all figures in per centages )

|                    |                 | <b>Share among<br/>BJD Voters</b> | <b>Share in Sample</b> |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Age :</b>       | Up to 25 yrs.   | 16.4                              | 16.4                   |
|                    | 26-35 yrs.      | 27.9                              | 30.1                   |
|                    | 36-45 yrs.      | 27.1                              | 23.8                   |
|                    | 46-55 yrs.      | 10.0                              | 11.2                   |
|                    | 56 & above      | 18.6                              | 18.4                   |
| <b>Education :</b> | Illiterate      | 37.1                              | 34.5                   |
|                    | Up to Primary   | 29.3                              | 33.4                   |
|                    | Up to Matric    | 18.6                              | 22.7                   |
|                    | College & above | 14.3                              | 8.2                    |
| <b>Community:</b>  | Upper Caste     | 53.6                              | 34.8                   |
|                    | OBC             | 25.7                              | 18.6                   |
|                    | SC              | 18.6                              | 28.2                   |
|                    | ST              | 0.7                               | 16.2                   |
|                    | Others          | 1.4                               | 1.6                    |
| <b>Gender :</b>    | Male            | 48.6                              | 47.9                   |
|                    | Female          | 51.4                              | 52.1                   |
| <b>Locality :</b>  | Urban           | 8.6                               | 7.7                    |
|                    | Rural           | 91.4                              | 92.3                   |

Source: NES ' 99: CSDS Data Unit

Table . No. 7  
Social Profile of Voters of RJD (1999)

(all figures in per centages )

|                               | Share among<br>RJD Voters | Share in Sample |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Age :</b> Up to 25 yrs.    | 22.5                      | 22.2            |
| 26-35 yrs.                    | 25.0                      | 24.7            |
| 36-45 yrs.                    | 19.4                      | 24.5            |
| 46-55 yrs.                    | 13.1                      | 12.0            |
| 56 & above                    | 20.0                      | 16.5            |
| <b>Education :</b> Illiterate | 56.9                      | 58.7            |
| Up to Primary                 | 15.0                      | 13.7            |
| Up to Matric                  | 18.1                      | 18.8            |
| College & above               | 8.1                       | 7.2             |
| <b>Community :</b> Rajput     | 0.6                       | 7.8             |
| Upper caste                   | 0.6                       | 9.5             |
| Yadav                         | 25.0                      | 14.1            |
| Kurmi                         | 3.1                       | 6.7             |
| Low OBC                       | 31.9                      | 31.1            |
| SC                            | 16.9                      | 14.6            |
| Muslims                       | 20.0                      | 9.1             |
| Others                        | 1.9                       | 0.7             |
| <b>Gender :</b> Male          | 58.1                      | 51.5            |
| Female                        | 41.9                      | 48.5            |
| <b>Locality :</b> Urban       | 16.3                      | 9.3             |
| Rural                         | 83.8                      | 90.7            |

Source : NES ' 99 : CSDS Data Unit

Table. No. 8

## Social Profile of Voters Samajwadi Party (1999)

(all figures in per centages )

|                    |                 | Share among<br>SP Voters | Share in Sample |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Age:</b>        | Up to 25 yrs.   | 22.9                     | 19.2            |
|                    | 26-35 yrs.      | 28.6                     | 29.4            |
|                    | 36-45 yrs.      | 23.3                     | 20.5            |
|                    | 46-55 yrs.      | 12.9                     | 14.2            |
|                    | 56 & above      | 12.4                     | 16.7            |
| <b>Education:</b>  | Illiterate      | 44.8                     | 45.0            |
|                    | Up to Primary   | 20.5                     | 15.3            |
|                    | Up to Matric    | 21.9                     | 23.1            |
|                    | College & above | 11.9                     | 16.1            |
| <b>Community :</b> | Brahmin         | 2.4                      | 7.3             |
|                    | Rajput          | 2.4                      | 9.7             |
|                    | Yadav           | 31.0                     | 7.8             |
|                    | OBC             | 37.6                     | 33.1            |
|                    | SC              | 5.1                      | 20.8            |
|                    | Muslim          | 21.0                     | 9.1             |
| <b>Gender:</b>     | Male            | 61.4                     | 56.0            |
|                    | Female          | 38.6                     | 44.0            |
| <b>Locality :</b>  | Urban           | 28.1                     | 25.0            |
|                    | Rural           | 71.9                     | 75.0            |

Source : NES ' 99 : CSDS Data Unit

Table. No. 9

## Social Profile of Voters of Shiv Sena and NCP (1999)

( all figures in per centage )

|                    |                 | Share among<br>Shiv Sena | Share among<br>NCP | Share in Sample |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Age :</b>       | Up to 25 yrs.   | 18.5                     | 14.2               | 16.3            |
|                    | 26-35 yrs.      | 25.0                     | 17.3               | 27.0            |
|                    | 36-45 yrs.      | 20.5                     | 21.0               | 21.7            |
|                    | 46-55 yrs.      | 19.5                     | 18.9               | 15.9            |
|                    | 56 & above      | 16.5                     | 28.3               | 19.0            |
| <b>Education :</b> | Illiterate      | 35.5                     | 50.7               | 38.4            |
|                    | Up to Primary   | 25.0                     | 25.6               | 26.4            |
|                    | Up to Matric    | 25.0                     | 15.1               | 23.2            |
|                    | College & above | 14.0                     | 8.2                | 11.6            |
| <b>Community :</b> | Upper Caste     | 9.5                      | 7.8                | 11.2            |
|                    | Maratha         | 30.5                     | 31.5               | 23.6            |
|                    | Kunbi           | 20.0                     | 16.0               | 12.8            |
|                    | OBC             | 34.0                     | 20.1               | 27.2            |
|                    | SC              | 3.0                      | 8.2                | 8.3             |
|                    | ST              | 2.0                      | 4.1                | 6.5             |
|                    | Muslims         | 0.5                      | 11.9               | 8.3             |
|                    | Others          | 0.5                      | 0.5                | 2.1             |
| <b>Gender :</b>    | Male            | 51.0                     | 47.9               | 49.5            |
|                    | Female          | 49.0                     | 52.1               | 50.5            |
| <b>Locality :</b>  | Urban           | 32.0                     | 23.7               | 33.3            |
|                    | Rural           | 68.0                     | 76.3               | 66.7            |

Source : NES ' 99 : CSDS Data Unit



Table. No. 10  
Social Profile of Voters of TDP (1999)

( all figures in per centage )

|                               | Share among<br>TDP Voters | Share in Sample |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Age :</b> Up to 25 yrs.    | 16.9                      | 16.9            |
| 26-35 yrs.                    | 26.8                      | 27.6            |
| 36-45 yrs.                    | 22.5                      | 22.3            |
| 46-55 yrs.                    | 12.7                      | 15.0            |
| 56 & above                    | 21.1                      | 18.3            |
| <b>Education :</b> Illiterate | 57.5                      | 53.4            |
| Up to Primary                 | 21.4                      | 19.1            |
| Up to Matric                  | 12.4                      | 14.2            |
| College & above               | 7.9                       | 12.9            |
| <b>Community:</b> Upper Caste | 6.2                       | 7.2             |
| Reddy                         | 3.1                       | 5.1             |
| Kamma                         | 6.2                       | 3.7             |
| Peasant OBC                   | 22.0                      | 16.5            |
| Maratha, etc                  | 10.1                      | 8.6             |
| Lower OBC                     | 20.6                      | 20.8            |
| SC                            | 5.4                       | 7.4             |
| ST                            | 13.8                      | 13.7            |
| Muslim                        | 8.7                       | 13.0            |
| Others                        | 3.9                       | 4.1             |
| <b>Gender :</b> Male          | 47.0                      | 47.4            |
| Female                        | 53.0                      | 52.6            |
| <b>Locality :</b> Urban       | 20.3                      | 28.5            |
| Rural                         | 79.7                      | 71.5            |

Source : NES ' 99 : CSDS Data Unit

Table. No. 11

## Social Profile of Voters of Trinmul Congress (1999)

( all figures in per centage )

|                                | Share among<br>TC Voters | Share in Sample |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Age :</b> Up to 25 yrs.     | 20.8                     | 21.2            |
| 26-35 yrs.                     | 34.1                     | 30.9            |
| 36-45 yrs.                     | 20.2                     | 22.8            |
| 46-55 yrs.                     | 12.1                     | 12.8            |
| 56 & above                     | 12.7                     | 12.2            |
| <b>Education:</b> Illiterate   | 22.0                     | 22.9            |
| Up to Primary                  | 26.0                     | 26.8            |
| Up to Matric                   | 34.7                     | 29.1            |
| College & above                | 16.8                     | 18.7            |
| <b>Community :</b> Upper Caste | 43.9                     | 36.0            |
| OBC                            | 11.6                     | 11.5            |
| SC                             | 24.9                     | 28.4            |
| ST                             | 1.2                      | 2.7             |
| Muslims                        | 8.7                      | 13.1            |
| Others                         | 9.8                      | 8.4             |
| <b>Gender :</b> Male           | 59.0                     | 53.7            |
| Female                         | 41.0                     | 46.3            |
| <b>Locality :</b> Urban        | 7.5                      | 11.0            |
| Rural                          | 92.5                     | 89.0            |

Source : NES ' 99 : CSDS Data Unit

Table. No. 12

## Performance of Some Regional Parties: 1995-2000

|        | 1996  |                | 1998  |                | 1999  |                | 1994 -1995 |                | 1996-1997 |                | 1999-2000 |                |
|--------|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|----------------|
|        | Seats | Votes<br>( % ) | Seats | Votes<br>( % ) | Seats | Votes<br>( % ) | Seats      | Votes<br>( % ) | Seats     | Votes<br>( % ) | Seats     | Votes<br>( % ) |
| Akali  | 8     | 28.7           | 8     | 32.9           | 2     | 28.6           |            |                | 75        | 37.8           | -         | -              |
| BJD    |       |                | 9     | 27.5           | 10    | 33.0           |            |                |           |                | 68        | 29.6           |
| DMK    | 17    | 25.6           | 5     | 20.1           | 12    | 23.1           |            |                | 173       | 42.1           |           |                |
| AIADMK | -     | 7.8            | 18    | 25.9           | 10    | 25.7           |            |                | 4         | 21.5           |           |                |
| RJD    |       |                | 17    | 26.6           | 7     | 28.3           |            |                | 124       | 28.2           |           |                |
| Samata | 6     | 14.5           | 10    | 15.7           |       |                | 7          | 7.1            |           |                | 84        | 8.8            |
| SP     | 16    | 20.8           | 20    | 28.7           | 26    | 24.1           |            |                | 110       | 21.8           |           |                |
| S S    | 15    | 16.8           | 6     | 19.7           | 16    | 16.9           | 73         | 15.5           |           |                | 69        | 17.0           |
| NCP    |       |                |       |                | 6     | 21.6           |            |                |           |                | 58        | 22.5           |
| TC     |       | 7              | 24.4  | 8              | 26.0  |                |            |                |           |                |           |                |

Source : CSDS Data Unit

**Abbreviations used in Tables**

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| AC         | Arunachal Congress   |
| AGP        | Asom Ganatantra Parishad ( 1957 ), Asom Gan Parishad (1984-) |
| AD         | Akali Dal / Party * all factions mentioned together          |
| AIADMK     | All India Anna Dravid Munnetra Kazhgam                       |
| APHLC      | All Party Hill Leaders' Conference                           |
| ASDC       | Autonomous State Demand Committee                            |
| BC         | Bangla Congress  |
| BJD        | Biju Janata Dal  |
| CJ         | Congress ( Jagjivan Ram )                                    |
| CS         | Congress ( Socialist )                                       |
| CSJ        | Chhota Nagpur and Santhal Pargana Janata Party               |
| CT         | Congress ( Tiwari )  |
| CW         | Commonweal   |
| DMK        | Dravid Munnetra Kazhagam                                     |
| EITU       | Eastern Indian Tribal Union                                  |
| FB         | Forward Bloc   |
| GNLF       | Gorkha National Liberation Front                             |
| GP         | Gantantra Parishad   |
| HLD / INLD | Haryana Lok Dal / Indian National Lok Dal                    |
| HLS        | Haryana Lok Shakti   |
| HVC        | Himachal Vikas Congress                                      |
| HVP        | Haryana Vikas Party  |
| IPF        | Indian People's Front  |
| IUML       | Indian Union Muslim League                                   |
| JDG        | Janata Dal ( Gujarat )                                       |
| JKP / D    | Jharkhand Party / Dal  |
| JMM        | Jharkhand Mukti Morcha                                       |
| JP         | Janata Party   |
| KCP        | Karnataka Congress Party                                     |
| KC*        | Kerala Congress * all factions                               |
| LC         | Loktantrik Congress  |
| LD         | Lok Dal  |
| LS         | Lok Shakti   |
| MADMK      | MGR Anna Dravid Munnetra Kazhagam                            |
| MDMK       | Marumalarchi DMK   |
| MGP        | Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party                               |
| MGRK       | MGR Munnetra Kazhagam  |
| MIM        | Majlis – E Ittehadul Musalmeen                               |
| ML         | Muslim League  |
| MML        | Madras Muslim League   |
| MP         | MahaGujarat Parishad   |
| MPVC       | Madhya Pradesh Vikas Congress                                |
| MSC        | Manipur State Congress                                       |

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| NC        | National Conference   |
| NCP       | National Congress Party   |
| NNO       | Naga National Organization  |
| NPC       | Nagaland People's Council   |
| PDF       | People's Democratic Front   |
| PMK       | Pattali Makkal Kachi  |
| PWP       | Peasants' and Workers' Party  |
| RJD       | Rashtriya Janata Dal  |
| SCF \ RPI | Scheduled Castes Federation (1952-57),<br>Republican Party of India , all factions. |
| RRP       | Ram Rajya Parishad  |
| RSP       | Revolutionary Socialist Party   |
| SDF       | Sikkim Democratic Front   |
| SJP       | Samajwadi Janata Party  |
| SKJP      | Sikkim Janata Parishad  |
| SMP       | Samata Party  |
| SP        | Samajwadi Party   |
| SS        | Shiv Sena   |
| SSP       | Sikkim Sangram Parishad   |
| TC        | Trinmul Congress  |
| TDP       | Telugu Desam Party  |
| TMC       | Tamil Maanil Congress   |
| TNT       | Tamil Nadu Toilers' Party   |
| TPS       | Telangana Praja Samiti  |
| TRS       | Tamil Nadu Rajiv Congress   |
| TTC       | Tamil Nadu & Travancore Congress  |
| UC        | Utkal Congress  |
| UFN       | United Front of Nagas   |
| UGDP      | United Goan Democratic Party  |
| UG ( S )  | United Goan ( Sequeria )  |
| UMF       | United Minorities Front   |
| VHP       | Vishwa Hindu Parishad   |

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