

A CASE STUDY ON POLITICAL PARTIES AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN TELANGANA

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ABSTRACT

The movement for a separate Telangana state has been hailed by many intellectuals as a democratic struggle of the people of a region against political domination and economic exploitation. The central government's decision to create a new state is seen as an official recognition of the people's aspiration for identity and self-rule. Interrogating such perceptions, this article examines the process by which a Telangana identity has been constructed and throws light on different factors that contributed to it. The Telangana identity is built partly on fact, and partly on half-truths, prejudices, and false hopes. Apart from intellectuals, the resurrection of the regional identity has been facilitated by the opportunism of political parties, in particular, the unjustifiable inaction of the left. Electoral politics in India has long been considered a challenge for comparative politics; from the distinctiveness of the transition and consolidation of democracy and through the understanding of the way in which the socio-economic complexities of such a heterogeneous society have adapted to and interacted with the institutions of parliamentary politics. Democratic values and practices are crucial for democratic institutionalization and the development of party strength. Political parties in the Fourth Republic will be explored to ascertain their contributions to the achievement of democratic consolidation in the country. Based on empirical evidence gathered from the activities of political parties of this dispensation

Keywords: political parties, political domination, consolidation of democracy, Telangana identity

INTRODUCTION

An attempt has been made in this chapter to explore the dynamics of political mobilization and factors which have shaped the forms and nature of political mobilization with reference to the movement for separate Telangana. It particularly addresses the relationship between identities, relative deprivation of a region and the "political opportunity structures" with the creation of new political and administrative unit has shaped the nature and form of political mobilization in Telangana. It also attempts to explore the reasons why the movement for separate Telangana sustained itself for long and the factors for large mass of people. Political parties and elections play an important role in the analysis of politics in developing countries, particularly in the analysis of democratization, and specifically the consolidation of democratic political regimes. Among political scientists, the existence of free and fair elections on a regular basis is considered the minimal condition for a democracy. From a deeper perspective, it is when elections involve the true competition of political parties based on their proposed policies and platforms, and not the popularity of individual political candidates or voting based on special interests, that consolidation of democracy is advanced. There is a general agreement among political analysts that democratic consolidation would be impossible without the effective participation of political parties. Political parties are the sole means of translating electoral outcomes into effective action, and they are a major component in legitimising control of political office. The literature on new democracies emphasises the organisational and structural obstacles faced by political parties in the process of democratic consolidation. It is, however, possible that these arguments apply in general to the body of scholarship which reduces

democratic consolidation to the alternation of governing parties but, in case, may or may not be going beyond the meaning he intends. Democratic procedures need to be built into the very first level of political organisation for a fully integrated democracy to occur, and that means at the very branch level of political parties. Again, a series of questions can help structure evaluations of the relative democratic nature of local political organizations. The purpose of the questions is not to suggest that there is only one recipe for internal party organisation, but rather to suggest the central issues that need to be discussed within an organisation as it seeks to improve its practical, internal democratic procedures. The registration of more parties which ordinarily should have led to increase in political participation and political competition, however, appears not to be meeting this goal. Political parties are the backbone of democratic governance, acting as conduits for public representation, policy formulation, and electoral competition. Their historical evolution, ideological foundations, and operational structures significantly influence the Nation's democratic processes. Elections, a cornerstone of democracy, give citizens the power to choose their representatives and shape governance at various levels—Parliamentary, State, and Local. However, the electoral process in India is not without challenges. Political polarization, identity-based mobilisation, financial influence, and electoral corruption continue to test the resilience of democratic institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mihail Chiru (2024) While scholars of clientelism have long recognized that party organization characteristics influence the capacity of parties to pursue clientelism, the consequences of clientelism for party organization remain underexplored. This article examines how clientelism influences one salient aspect of party organization in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), internal democracy, arguing that in parties pursuing clientelism, selection processes are less competitive, and leader domination over party bodies is necessary, as is limiting the influence of rank-and-file members on organizational and policy issues. Longitudinal analyses corroborate the hypothesized negative relationship for a sample of CEE parties and for a larger sample of parties outside the region. While single-shot and relational clientelism are both negatively associated with intra-party democracy, the latter has a stronger impact. The statistical analyses are complemented by a qualitative account of how clientelism and weak intra-party democracy fit in with the CEE parties' origin, ideological orientation, and broader organisational strategies.

Mudasir Bashir Bhat (2023) Dynastic politics prevails across the countries of the world. Post world II, the world witnessed the emergence of new nation-states. Most of these countries opted for a democratic form of government as against the experience of monarchical/autocratic rule. Despite such precedence, the countries have witnessed a surge of elite classes like dynastic politicians. Their familial inheritance of political capital, like name recognition, political connections, financial resources, etc., yields them an electoral advantage over non-dynasts. The trend questions the ideals of democracy, like political equality. It also raises concerns about the popular representation in democracies because of the privileged treatment given to a particular class of people for their familial background. In an urge to win elections, political parties prefer

and nominate them over others for contesting elections. India is among the largest democracies in the world and manifests a dynastic character. The Political parties across the Indian state have dynastic lineages, whether at the national or regional, or local levels. The paper will highlight the persistence and dominance of such dynastic families across India's political parties, questioning its representational aspect. It would also highlight the deficit caused by the practice of dynastic politics.

Hamsa Ramakrishna (2022) Political parties perform a number of functions in a political entity. Chief among these functions is that of representation. In modern liberal democratic theory, the electorate votes for people to represent them. Most times the platform for election is provided by political parties. India has a multi-party system, where political parties are classified as national, state or regional level parties. The status of party is accorded by the Election Commission of India, and the same is reviewed occasionally. All parties are registered with the Election Commission. Despite the large number of political parties operating in India, very few are able to make their presence felt at the national level except when it comes to alliances. The natural reason for this is that it takes a long time for any party to evolve from its regional moorings and have its ideology accepted by a large enough segment of the population. The table below lists political parties that boast of a pan-India presence. These have been listed in alphabetical order, and not necessarily in the order of their influence.

Aka Rama (2022) This article examines the politics of State formation in India by taking up the case of Telangana. Drawing from the emerging literature on the politics of recognition and territorial accommodation in multinational federations, I argue that territorial accommodation of Telangana was made possible by the convergence of strategic interests and role of multiple actors to recognize Telangana's distinctive territorial identity and accommodate its Statehood demand when an opportune 'political opportunity structure' emerged in the late 1990s till 2014. It extends the insights of 'actor-centred' institutionalism and contributes to an emerging literature which emphasizes the 'multi centred origins' of border change and State formation in India in particular, and in multinational federations in general. By underscoring State formation as a complex process, this article cautions against a simplistic reading of the politics of State formation in India as an act of one-upmanship whereby the Centre can unilaterally make or break State borders.

Moeketsi Kali (2022) Civil society's efforts to push democratic transitions and deepen democracy are influenced by the political context in which they operate. This study examined the role of civil society in consolidating democracy in Lesotho. Specifically, it explored the tactics employed by the unions to defend human rights and deepen democratic practices. The author conducted a face-to-face interview with the key informants and used content analysis to understand the mechanisms used by the unions to bargain and defend the interests of their members. This study established that unions in Lesotho play a significant role in consolidating democracy through diverse activities such as advocacy, aggregation of interests and checks and balances. However, their civility and cooperative habits are undermined by the irresponsible government of Lesotho. Hence, they resort to social protests in most cases for the government to respond. Though protests seem effective when offsetting the injustices and violation of people's rights, they open up a Pandora's Box since they lead to loss of life in Lesotho. The

security forces in the country often unleash disproportionate force and kill some protesters. Hence, efforts to consolidate democracy are largely undermined by police and army brutality. **Nicolas Schmid (2021)** Despite growing scholarship on the politics of sociotechnical transitions, the role of a particularly relevant actor type – political parties – has been largely overlooked. To address this gap, we examine party position change on energy technologies and related policy instruments, and analyze how these party positions co-evolve with technological change. Based on a novel dataset, we map positions of relevant political parties in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, 1980–2017. We find that changes in positions and their salience vary across energy technologies and party families, and correlate with broader transition pathways identified by previous studies. We discover that – moderated by party and party system characteristics and path dependence – position change results from ‘technological learning’ by parties based on changing issue characteristics of technologies. We discuss the relevance of our findings for the politics of sociotechnical transitions and provide avenues for future research.

David Musa (2020) The main objective of this paper is to examine the impact of political parties on democratic. Political parties are the engine room of democratic societies and without them; there will be no genuine democracy. The Fourth Republic in Nigeria witnessed revitalized activities of political parties after military interregnum. Democratic consolidation largely depends on the character and conduct of the country's political parties, and the paper interrogates the extent to which they have shaped or stagnated democracy. This study adopts elite theory as framework, and was predicated on historical design. Data gathered were textually analyzed. With a reliance on secondary data such as books, journals and internet materials, the interplay between political parties and democratic consolidation was x-rayed. The challenges to democratic consolidation in the period of study (absence of well-institutionalized political parties, godfatherism, and lack of internal democracy) are observable. This research recommends the overhauling of political parties in order to correct the current state of party politics and democratic practice.

Kham Khan Suan Hausing (2018) This article examines the politics of State formation in India by taking up the case of Telangana. Drawing from the emerging literature on the politics of recognition and territorial accommodation in multinational federations, I argue that territorial accommodation of Telangana was made possible by the convergence of strategic interests and role of multiple actors to recognize Telangana's distinctive territorial identity and accommodate its Statehood demand when an opportune ‘political opportunity structure’ emerged in the late 1990s till 2014. It extends the insights of ‘actor-centred’ institutionalism and contributes to an emerging literature which emphasizes the ‘multi-centred origins’ of border change and State formation in India in particular, and in multinational federations in general. By underscoring State formation as a complex process, this article cautions against a simplistic reading of the politics of State formation in India as an act of one-upmanship whereby the Centre can unilaterally make or break State borders.

Dr. S. S. Rana (2017) This paper focus on Caste in Indian society rises to social movements is largely decided by birth. In the early 1990s there began a shift in caste politics. Indian voters are often perceived as being biased in favour of parties that claim to represent their caste. We

incorporate this caste bias into voter preferences and examine its influence on the distributive policies and corruption practices of the two major political parties in the North Indian state. It should be pointed out that these new political parties emerged not on a national level but on a village and regional level, and were most dominant in North India. It is easier for the youth to maintain their status by rallying rather than remain loyal to a specific party. In present paper reviewed that, the current situation of politics while concerned with the caste in India.

K.C. Suri (2016) The party political domain of India is replete with a large number of parties representing the tapestry of the Indian society. Many of them are based in specific regions and states, built around social and linguistic identities. While this enhanced the representative character of the parties, it also contributed to varied patterns of political competition and unstable governments. The two major national parties—the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party—becoming ready and willing to form coalitions heralded an era of coalition governments both at the centre and states, enabling parties to increase their power and their pay-offs. Parties across the political spectrum have tended to converge on macroeconomic policy, but continue to diverge on social policies and larger issues that confront India, such as nation building and secularism. Chronic lack of internal democracy coupled with the rise of political corruption and clientelist practices are matters of serious concern. A broader view of governance, resisting temptations to concentrate power and pursue personal enrichment would enable parties to deliver policies for a better, more just society.

Financing of Political Parties and Electoral Expenditure

Political parties must have adequate funding to carry out their activities, effectively campaign, and participate in democratic governance. However, financing political parties and regulating electoral expenditure poses significant challenges to maintaining transparency and accountability and preventing money power from influencing politics. Political parties in India receive funding from various sources, including individual donations, corporate contributions, and party members. However, a lack of comprehensive regulations and loopholes in the existing legal framework can create opportunities for illicit or undisclosed funding, raising concerns about vested interests' influence on the political process. Campaigning, rallies, advertisements, and other promotional activities cost huge expenditures in India. It can create an uneven playing field and give parties with more financial resources an advantage, potentially marginalising smaller or less well-funded parties. To cover these costs, political parties must raise funds. Moreover, the Party's funding transparency is critical for ensuring accountability and preventing corruption. The opacity surrounding party financing in India, on the other hand, poses a challenge. Disclosure requirements, auditing mechanisms, and public reporting of party funding and expenditure are often inadequate, making it difficult for citizens to assess the financial backing of political parties.

Dynastic politics and democratic deficit

The practice of dynastic politics could be found across democracies of the world. In some countries, its practice may be low, while in others, dynastic politics could be found at an accelerated rate. The tradition of Dynastic politics has been an old-age phenomenon. The monarchs were the centre of power. Their unchallenged authority and all-pervasive power led them to install their kin as their successor. It was natural that the off-springs of monarchs would

succeed them in power. In today's world, monarchical regimes still exist, but post world war second, most countries have preferred democratic forms of government. The newly emerged nation states following the ideals of democracy were supposed to form a government where everyone sharing the public life would have equal opportunity to be a part of the government.

Significance of Political Parties in Democratic Governance

Political parties are vital foundations of democracy because they provide political representation articulate policy goals, and ensure the smooth operation of a vibrant and pluralistic democratic system. Apart from serving as intermediaries between citizens and the government and representing the population's different interests and ambitions, they also serve as a forum for political engagement, allowing people to express their concerns, engage in political debates, and contribute to the democratic process. Parties provide avenues for grassroots mobilisation, policy lobbying, and public participation through organisational structures. Furthermore, political parties are essential in forming governments and the country's governance. In a parliamentary system like India's, political parties compete in elections, and the party or coalition with the most seats forms the government. The aftereffect of election is that it provides a pool of potential leaders and policymakers who assume positions of power and responsibility. Political parties play an essential role in legislative bodies, influencing the legislative agenda, debating policies, and holding the government accountable. Parties are essential in the functioning of the, shaping legislation, participating in parliamentary committees, and scrutinising the executive. Further, political parties contribute to the stability and continuity of the democratic process.

Constitution and Law in relation to Political Parties

Although political parties were not mentioned in the Constitution until the fifty second constitutional amendment of 1985, the existence of some well-organised political parties was presumed as these were already functioning. The Constitution only guaranteed freedom of association as a fundamental right. Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 provides for registration with the Election Commission of associations and bodies of individual citizens of India as political parties. The Tenth Schedule to the Constitution which was added by the Constitution mentions political parties only for the specific purpose of considering disqualification of a person for membership of either House of Parliament or of the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council of a State on the ground of defection from his political party. With that exception, even today, there is no law governing the formation, registration, functioning or regulation of political parties. The Election Commission accords recognition to political parties as national or state parties in accordance with the norms laid down in the Election Symbols This is for the very limited purpose of allocation of symbols.

Politics and Identity

An important aspect of Telangana state politics today is the absence of a credible opposition. We say credible opposition because during their long rule of the state previously, both Congress and Telugu Desam party consistently opposed the state's bifurcation though in the end it is the Congress party at the Centre which acceded to the demand for statehood. Democracy requires

that there be an opposition to critique and counter-balance the ruling party. The two main opposition parties, Indian National Congress and the Telugu Desam Party, have some presence in the new state. The left parties, which traditionally had some presence in the state, are in a weak position both electorally and morally in comparison with the tremendous power of identity politics unleashed by the TRS on one side and the juggernaut of growing capitalism in the state on the other. TRS, which rules the state, also knows very well how to demonize its opponents constantly using the Telangana identity card. In the current situation of a single party dominated state, any individual or party criticizing the TRS becomes the enemy of Telangana state and Telangana identity. Demonization of political opponents becomes easy when a state of emotionally-loaded identity politics prevails.

CONCLUSION

From their historical roots in the independence movement to their current roles, political parties continue to be pivotal in shaping governance and political discourse. The Election Commission of India plays a crucial role in ensuring fair and transparent elections and maintaining the integrity of the democratic process. The registration and deregistration of political parties involve rigorous scrutiny to ensure compliance with legal and democratic principles. Challenges such as factionalism, regionalism, and identity politics continue to test the resilience and adaptability of political parties. Despite these challenges, political parties remain central to India's democracy, facilitating political participation, representing diverse interests, and contributing to governance and policy-making. All in all, the evolution of the party-voter relationship and the larger impact of political parties on democracy, moving in the direction of greater consolidation and improvement in the quality of democracy, particularly over the past two decades on minority and/or coalition governments. In sum, the formation of Telangana marks the culmination of a complex process which brought to the fore the recognition and accommodation of a sustained demand of Statehood by a territorially defined ethno linguistic group within an overarching ethno linguistic State.

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