Abstract

Statement of the Problem

The decade of 1990s was said to have changed the nature of politics in India. This change was ushered in by the three forces of Mandal, Mandir and Market. From amongst these, the Mandal refers to the political assertion of the OBC castes in particular and ascendance of caste issue in politics in general. Even though OBC politics had got an all India repercussions, it played itself out basically at the state level. In fact, the OBC assertion was one of the factors instrumental in transferring the theatre of Indian politics from the ‘national’ level to the ‘state’ level. During 1990s, efforts have been made by the social and political scientists to study the state politics in order to understand this political process. These studies include the works by Palshikar and Birmal (2003), Palshikar and Deshpande (2003), Vora and Palshikar (1996) on Maharashtra; Subramanian (2003), Subramanian (1999) on Tamil Nadu; and Hasan (1998), Pai (2007) on Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, there have been some studies on the OBC politics in some north Indian states in the post-Mandal phase, like Jaffrelot (2005). However, one does not witness many studies which try to compare the OBC political assertion taking place in the north, south and western states in India in the post-Mandal era. This study is an effort to bridge the gap in this aspect of research on political process. In the light of this comparison, this study has tried to assess the debate on democratisation of Indian politics. It has done so by analysing the change in the social composition of assemblies during the 1990s, the transformation in voting by the OBC castes, and the political viability of the OBC politics in the states.

Objectives of the Study

The study in this thesis sought to compare political assertion of the OBCs in three states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh after 1990. This comparison is done mainly by using the secondary data and published material on the political process in these three states. The data is accessed from the National Election Studies (NES) prepared by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS). The published material includes the various books and research articles published on the state politics of the above-mentioned states. Both the types of material focus mainly on analysing the politics of particular state. The study has
made use of this material to make a comparative analysis of the OBC politics in these three states. Along with these two sources, a limited fieldwork has been undertaken in these three states. This is mainly in the form of open-ended interviews with the main OBC leaders and activists in those three states. These interviews served the purpose of acquainting the researcher with the first hand experience of the situation on the ground as well as enabled him to cross check the secondary sources that have been studied and referred.

The Chapter Plan

The chapter plan of the thesis is as follows:

First Chapter: Interaction between Caste and Modern Indian Politics.
Second Chapter: Historical Roots of OBC Politics.
Fourth Chapter: Mediating with Political Hindutva
Fifth Chapter: Conclusion.

First Chapter: Interaction between Caste and Modern Indian Politics.

The British colonialism made a deep impact upon the caste system in India. The British government’s caste wise enumeration in the census made following impact upon the caste system and its interaction with the politics:

a. Many claims by a number of lower castes of their higher ritual status.

b. British government started to decide on these claims of the lower castes.

c. Caste identities were used by the British government as a bulwark against the nationalist movement.

d. Induced people to organise and represent their interests in politics on the basis of caste identity.

The larger process of modernisation, secularisation and urbanisation unleashed by the British rule changed the caste system in following ways:

a. Formation of trans-local identities of ‘lower castes’, ‘depressed castes’ etc.

b. The ritual hierarchy in the caste system was challenged by the discourse of rights, justice and equality.
During post-colonial period, caste started to play its role in Indian politics through an institution called ‘caste association’. These caste associations affected the traditional caste system in following manner:

a. Membership of caste association has not been purely ascriptive. This means that though taking birth in a particular caste is a necessary condition to become member of the caste association, it does not guarantee the membership. This implies that one has to ‘join’ the caste association in order to be its member.

b. The barriers between the endogamous sub castes within particular caste are broken.

c. Caste associations are a response of elite amongst particular caste to bridge occupational diversity and disparity of wealth within a particular caste.

d. Through their caste associations, members of the lower castes attempt to fight the dominance of the upper castes in the distribution of political power. This implies that the caste associations though make use of the traditional identity of caste, challenge the hierarchy in the caste system.

e. Relation between caste and profession of an individual is no longer decided by the religious code, but by the financial position of individual.

Rajni Kothari (2001) had analysed the impact of caste upon Indian politics. According to him, this happens in three stages. In the first stage, the upper castes come to power. Kothari calls this caste as ‘entrenched caste’. In the second stage, this power would be challenged by the other higher castes who would be lower in the ritual hierarchy than the entrenched caste. These other higher castes are termed as ‘ascendant caste’ by Kothari. During this stage both the ascendant and the entrenched castes get factionalised. In the third stage, these factions of the higher castes may recruit the leaders belonging to the lower castes in order to strengthen their factions. This may lead to the politics of lower castes, if they have got favourable numbers, leadership and ideology.

According to Rudolph and Rudolph (1987), interaction between caste and modern Indian politics has resulted into vertical mobilisation, horizontal mobilisation and differential mobilisation.
Interaction between the caste and Indian politics has been interspersed by region:

One witnesses a divide between the north Indian vs. south Indian pattern of caste-politics interaction. Thus, it had been observed that the caste structure in south India had been steeper in nature than the one found in the north India. In south India, the castes performing similar social functions as those performed by the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas in north India have not been granted those ritual status. These castes in south India have been relegated to the Shudra status. This made for greater resentment over Brahman dominance in south India than in the north India. Hence the non-Brahman movement was initiated in the south India and was absent in the north India. This has made Rudolphs (ibid) to conclude that horizontal mobilisation of the subject castes seems to have flourished in the regions where the caste hierarchy is relatively steep than in the areas with the ‘gradual and continuous social landscapes.’

During 1990s, the interaction between caste and Indian politics entered into a new stage. Since the British period itself, the caste blocs had been built in different parts of India. However, the 1990s witnessed emergence of caste blocs like OBCs and dalits and their increasing influence on the politics, especially at the state level. At the same time, this period witnessed fragmentation of these caste blocks into various single castes and on the basis of economically better off and worse off. This made for instability in the politics of the states. Moreover, during this period, an effort was made to forge an alliance between the OBCs and dalits on the basis of their common enmity with the upper castes. However, due to different reasons this coalition could not sustain for long. Till the decade of 1990s, the lower castes were interested mostly in upgrading their ritual status within caste hierarchy. This process has been termed as Sanskritisation. During 1990s, this process was supplemented by the process of ‘Backwardisation’ of the caste implying that the castes, especially the dominant castes in different states, wanted to get themselves included in the list of the backward castes to get reservation facilities. This did not free these castes from their Sanskritisation tendencies when it came to their self-image in the religious and cultural sphere. But in the material sphere they wanted to be called as backward castes to enable them to have share in ever declining education and job opportunities and to succeed in power struggle.
The issue of caste received a renewed significance in the politics of India during the 1990s. This period has been called as Post-Mandal period in the politics of India. This is so because during this period the OBC castes started to dominate the politics of India. These OBC castes created their dominance over the politics of India through their increasing influence on state politics. Actually, the moment of Mandal was significant for the OBC political assertion in the north Indian states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The impact of the Mandal moment had not been uniform across all the states in India. Thus, in the south Indian state like Tamil Nadu, the moment of Mandal did not make any significant impact in mobilisation of the OBC castes. Nevertheless, the OBC political mobilisation in this state changed significantly after 1990. In Maharashtra, on the other hand, an effort was made to organise the OBCs on the issue of caste and Mandal. However, this effort could not really take off. The OBCs got success in politics through Hindutva political forces here. Thus, one witnesses different trajectories of the OBC politics in these states during the Post-Mandal period. Incidentally, there are different patterns in the historical background of OBC mobilisation in these three states. In Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu the OBCs have got mobilised during the colonial period itself. Yet, the OBC politics in these two states takes different forms in the post colonial and post-Mandal period. So one witnesses interesting trajectories of similarities and dissimilarities in the OBC political mobilisation in these states. Their geographical position on the map of India also puts them distinctly from each other. One state being in the south India (Tamil Nadu), another in the north India (Uttar Pradesh), the third being in the western India (Maharashtra). Hence an effort has been made to analyse, assess and compare the OBC politics in the states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. This will also provide an insight into the different patterns of democratic politics in different states which would go a long way in enriching our understanding of the democratic politics in India.

**Second Chapter: Historical Roots of OBC Politics.**

I. The Context

The historical roots of OBC politics in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu can be found in the non-Brahman movement. While in UP, the origin of the OBC political assertion may be traced into the peasant politics of Charan Singh. The Non Brahman movement in Madras and Maharashtra had a colonial context and the
peasant politics in UP had a post-colonial context. Hence, the former had to respond to the Indian nationalism and the latter to the nation building discourse in the independent India.

II. The Ideological Patterns
a. Laid down by Mahatma Jotiba Phule in Maharashtra and Iyothee Thoss, Marimalai Adigal and E. V. R. Periyar in Madras; and by Rammanohar Lohia and Charan Singh in UP.

b. Phule, Thoss and Adigal tried to construct a counter-mythology of non-Brahmans and dalits. Phule spoke in terms of coalition between the non-Brahmans as well as dalits as shudra-ati shudras. Thoss was speaking for Parnyars, one of the dalit castes and Adigal for Vellalas, one of the rich non-Brahman castes. All the three were trying to highlight a social contradiction between those social groups and Brahmans.

c. Both Phule and Periyar were underlining the social contradiction between the Brahmans and non-Brahmans. Both were more radical in the sense that both of them rejected the Hindu religion as a source of caste system. Both of them highlighted the plight of dalits, women and wanted an alliance between these sections and non-Brahmans. The discourse of Thoss and Adigal had an element of Sanskritisation in them.

d. While Ram Manohar Lohia and his political parties demanded 60 % of reservation for the backward castes, dalits and women, it was Charan Singh’s leadership and politics which was instrumental in mobilizing the backward castes in UP. Charan Singh idealised the peasants’ life and argued that the exploitation and domination of the peasants in rural areas by the industrialists, bureaucracy in urban areas had been the hallmark of the policy of economic development in the post Independent India. He mobilised the backward castes in UP not on the basis of their identity of being members of backward caste community but on the basis of their identity of being peasants.

III. The Politics
a. The Parliamentary politics of the non-Brahmans in Madras province and in Maharashtra was initiated due to the 1919 declaration of the Montague-Chelmsford reforms which was for greater Indian participation in the colonial government process. This British policy made the non-Brahman movements in
Madras and Maharashtra to demand for separate communal electorates. According to the non-Brahmans, if they did not receive separate representation the political power would be usurped by Brahmans. This position of the non-Brahmans was opposed by the Congress which was against these communal electorates. In a way, this was a contest between the Congress which was wont on seeing all the Indians as parts of a single nation and the non Brahmans who were viewing the Indians as divided between the communities of Brahmans and non Brahmans who had antithetical interests.

In Uttar Pradesh, the mobilisation of the Backward Castes started during the 1960s. Here, during the colonial period, single castes like the Yadavs were getting organised. However, there was no fusion of these several middle castes into the backward cast or non-Brahman identity. After independence, many forces gave impetus for creation of the backward caste organisation. Due to the land reforms a section from amongst the erstwhile tenants belonging to the various backward castes got ownership of the land they were tilling. The organisation of All India Backward Classes Federation was established during 1950s, the backward castes got constitutional guarantees, the first Backward Classes Commission was established and its report was shelved. Further, during 1960s, the backward castes in UP were recruited by the various socialist parties and Jan Sangh. Since late 1960s, the backward caste mobilisation got a big boost at the hands of Charan Singh’s various political formations.

b. In Madras, the main achievement of the government of the Justice party, which was the non-Brahman’s political vehicle, was to introduce reservation for the backward castes in the government services. However, there were two layers within the Justice party. The one was made up of urban intellectuals who wanted to fight caste system tooth and nail. However, the second layer in the party was consisting of the landlords, rich bankers and traders amongst the non Brahmans. This element wanted to use the Justice party for their upward social and economic mobility which they hoped to achieve by replacing Brahmans from the seat of power by themselves. These non-Brahmans were as conservative in their social outlook as the Brahmans were when it came to dealing with the untouchables. The former group was without any direct connection with the political economy of the villages or with any lower segment of the society. The latter group however, was
ruling section in the political economy of the villages and hence was ruling the roost in making the policy of Justice Party.

The non-Brahman party in the Bombay provincial legislature attempted to challenge some ritual powers of the Brahman priests. However, they not only wanted to continue the hereditary Patil watan, they also tried to enhance the status, pay and power of the members of the Patil watan. The members of the non-Brahman party in the provincial legislature overwhelmingly belonged to the rich farmers and urban intellectuals amongst the non Brahmins. These members were sensitive to the struggles by the lower classes, tenants and agricultural labourers amongst the non-Brahmans and they had built alliances with the latter. However, these ruling classes amongst the non-Brahmans never took up the issues related to their poor brethren on their party or organisational platforms.

In 1977, the Janata party was able to come to power in UP defeating the Congress. The Janata Party in UP was an alliance between the Charan Singh led Bharatiya Lok Dal (which was formed by amalgamation between the Bharatiya Kranti Dal led by Charan Singh and the SSP) and Jan Sangh. This party got overwhelming support from the middle and big peasants in the western and eastern UP. These sections in UP belonged to the backward castes. When this government came to power, it had to take action on the Congress government appointed UP Most Backward Classes Commission Report. Instead of appointing a commission to inquire into the conditions of the Other Backward Classes as mentioned in the Constitution, the UP Congress government restricted the terms of reference of this Commission to the Most Backward Classes, ostensibly to keep the rich amongst the backward classes out of the purview of reservations. After coming to power the Janata party government reduced the reservations proposed by the Commission from 29.5% to 15%. Moreover, the new government introduced these reservations for the OBCs instead of MBCs, which made many rich castes amongst the OBCs like the Ahirs and Kurmis eligible for reservations.

IV. Interaction with the Congress

Due to the non-Brahmans’ identification of Congress as the party of the Brahmins, the non-Brahman political force in both the Bombay and Madras provinces was loyal to the British, which was seen as the only benefactor of the non Brahman interest in the contemporary situation. On this background, one witnesses merger of the non-Brahman movement in the Congress’ force of
nationalist politics in Maharashtra and sustenance of the movement’s existence in the Madras province. In Maharashtra, there were leaders like V.R. Shinde who were advocating synthesis between the nationalist movement of the Congress and the social reform movement of the non-Brahmans. Mahatma Gandhi’s leadership and the fact that Gandhi led Congress started to address the issues of peasants and lower castes made a greater impact upon the non-Brahman leadership in Maharashtra than their counterparts in Madras. The leaders of the Congress like N. V. Gadgil in Maharashtra also made difference. The fact that despite being Brahman Gadgil used to attack the shetji-bhatji adversaries of the non-Brahman movement and his personal equation with the non Brahman leader of repute like Jedhe proved decisive in this merger.

Gail Omvedt (1976), while writing on the non-Brahman movement in Maharashtra, maintained that the creation of Dravidian nationalism in the non-Brahman movement of Madras province provided the latter with the alternative nationalist ideological traction to sustain itself even during the post independence phase. While in the case of non-Brahman movement in Maharashtra according to Omvedt, the lack of alternative nationalism to the Congress variant of all-India nationalism meant that the non-Brahman movement would be taken under the influence of the Congress’ mass nationalism.

In UP after the Janata party came to power this coalition between the BKD and the Jan Sangh broke down on the issue of reservation being given to the OBCs. This was so as the upper castes represented by the Jan Sangh feared the ascendance of the OBCs if the latter were given reservation. Later during the 1980s, this coalition of the backward castes had to face the counter mobilisation of the upper castes and the SCs under the Congress organisation which ruled the state for nearly the entire decade of 1980s.


I. The Changes

In the post Mandal era, the party system in the three states changed and the OBC politics contributed to this change. Thus in Maharashtra the party system changed from one party dominance system to the multi-party system; in UP and TN, the two party system changed to the multi party system and the two alliance system respectively.
In Maharashtra, the OBCs before 1990 were subsumed under the Maratha leadership in Congress party. The hegemony of Congress party and Maratha leadership in the state politics was shaken due to internal contradiction between the Maratha leadership, the intervention by the central Congress organisation and the inability of the Maratha leadership to sustain the Bahujan ideology. This weakness of the Congress party created a political void in the state politics. The OBCs, who had become assertive as a result of Mandal commission report, found that Congress was not able to accommodate their political ambitions. This and the recruitment of the OBC leaders by the SS and the BJP made the OBCs to support the two parties. This meant that the SS and BJP would be accommodated in the political space left vacant by the Congress.

In TN, the social coalitions of the non-Brahmans stitched by the two main Dravidian parties were challenged by the single caste parties of the OBCs and dalits. This destabilised the hegemony of the Dravidian parties. Thus, since 1952 to 1989, the state went through three long spells when one party was in government for at least a decade. Excepting a period between 1952 to 1962 when Congress was a dominant party, this time also saw two party system. Although the constituent parties in this system differed over a period of time. However, since 1989, no incumbent party in the state was able to win the next election. This was reflected in the two party system being replaced by two alliance system where the constituent parties in both the alliances have been fluid. Thus during 1990s the Dravidian consensus between different non Brahman castes was disturbed from three sides. Firstly, single OBC castes started to have their separate political mobilisation. Second, so did happen with the dalits. Third, a more militant Tamil nationalist group broke out of the DMK alleging the dilution of Tamil nationalist ideology by the latter.

In UP, the OBCs had their political vehicle even before 1990. This had made the politics of the state bi-polar since 1969, one poll being Congress and other being the various political formations of Charan Singh. However, the post Mandal political scenario gave way to the multi party system as the parties started to mobilise particular caste and community on the basis of ‘othering’ of other caste/communities.
II. Instability
In Maharashtra, through the 1990s, the voting by the communities like OBCs and Marathas got fragmented between the various parties. Moreover, the district became a theatre of political activity. This meant that the political parties’ capacity to raise the issues at the state level got exhausted. The politics of the state started to be appearing like a sum total of district politics. This made for instability in the state politics. Also, emergence of urban areas as distinct political sphere and instability in the hold of the political parties over urban and rural areas further destabilised the state politics.
In TN, the main Dravidian parties had to rely on the small, caste based, niche parties to win elections. Moreover, the nature of social base that Dravidian parties used to have was transformed from the committed to the ephemeral. This made the party system in the state unstable. Hence, the elections started to be won or lost by the parties not on the basis of the perception of the incumbent government amongst the voters, but on the making or unmaking of electoral alliances composed of the parties able to catch the votes of the single castes or from particular sub region.
In UP, till the late 1990s, the main political parties in the state were identified with particular sections of society, the mobilisation being based on the social cleavage. However, this gave rise to the instability in government formation with short lived alliance governments. This, among other factors made some of the political parties to leave the cleavage based politics for the social umbrella alliance building. This meant that the social blocks disintegrated and politics got further fragmented at least till 2004.
III. The Ideology
In Maharashtra, an attempt was made to organise the OBCs on the basis of caste cleavage and ideology of social justice. However, this politics could not hold its own ground. The OBCs were successfully mobilised by the parties espousing Hinduwa ideology.
In TN, although the OBC social force fragmented into single caste parties, these small parties continue to espouse the ideology of Tamil nationalism.
The political party of the OBCs during pre-Mandal era in UP was advocating the ideology of peasant interest. However, during 1980s, this party witnessed a tussle between those who wanted to carry the peasant agenda and those who wanted to
pursue the caste issue. The latter group was able to hold on to the substantial
constituency of this party. Moreover, this group was able to present a strong
political force of OBCs during post-Mandal period. A section of OBC population
started to be mobilised on the basis of Hindutva ideology. In other words, the
issues of caste and communal mobilisation gained importance over the issue of
strategy of economic development.
By the end of 1990s, there was a consensus amongst all the parties to grant
reservations to the OBCs. Due to various reasons, the BJP diluted its militant
Hindutva ideology. All the parties accepted the economic policies of the
Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG). This gave rise to a political
landscape where apparently one may see many political options available. But in
reality, the contestation between these political forces was superficial or
nonexistent. Thus, to use the terms used by Yadav and Palshikar (2003), there
seemed to be rising 'competition' amongst the political actors but when it comes
to the options of the policy and programmes that these political players offer one
finds 'convergence'.

Fourth Chapter: Mediating with Political Hindutva

I. The background
In Maharashtra, the OBCs did not have independent mobilisation and politics
before 1990. They were part of Bahujan coalition stitched by the Congress party
under Maratha leadership. The political party representing Hindutva was having
negligible political presence till the late 1980s. Thus, the Jan Sangh and after 1980
the BJP was having social base in urban pockets and among the trading
community in the urban areas. Moreover, the Jan Sangh was having an image of
being Brahmanical political force. During 1980s, the Congress dillydallied on the
Mandal commission recommendations as some of the Maratha leaders in the
Congress suspected that Mandal recommemendations would disintegrate the
Maratha-Kunbi caste cluster as the Mandal commission report granted
reservations to the Kunbis and withheld them from Marathas. Moreover, this
process bred emergence of the communal organisations like Maratha Mahasangh
amongst the Marathas.
In Tamil Nadu (TN), the OBCs were the main constituency of the political
mobilisation done by the Dravidian parties since late 1950s. However, for nearly
two decades after independence, the Congress was also able to woo the OBCs in the state by appointing a member of the OBC community to the post of CM, reserving the government services for the OBCs. The Dravidian parties mobilised the OBCs on the basis of Dravidian nationalism, populism and charisma. The Hindutva political force was insignificant in the state politics before 1990.

The OBCs were being mobilised by the Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD) and other political formations under Charan Singh's leadership in UP. While the Jan Sangh had been performing better here than in the other two states, it was never in a position to challenge the Congress power in the state on its own. During 1960s, the Jan Sangh started to recruit leaders from a section of backward castes from some parts of the state. Moreover, some of the Congress leaders had been giving covert support to the Hindutva cause in the state right since independence. In fact, during 1980s, the Congress tried to make political use of both the Hindu and Muslim communal symbols and in the process lost both the Muslim and upper caste votes in the state.

II. The Interaction

In Maharashtra, though Shiv Sena's sons of soil ideology had got germs of Hindutva ideology within it, it was not until early 1980s that the Shiv Sena (SS) had adopted Hindutva ideology explicitly. This ideological transformation was impelled by the SS's wish to spread its tentacles from Mumbai to the rest of the rural Maharashtra. The ideological compatibility between the SS and the BJP made them to form an electoral alliance since the 1980s. However, both the BJP and the SS adopted different strategies to woo the OBCs in the state. While the SS rejected the Mandal reservations, the BJP supported them. Despite its rejection of the Mandal reservations, the SS was able to get a substantial OBC vote during the early 1990s mainly due to its ant-dalit stand which struck a chord with the OBCs who were violently attacking the assertive dalits in the villages, especially in Marathwada. The SS also cried foul at the domination of Marathas in state politics. This resonated with the feelings amongst the OBCs of their being left out of the political power in state. The BJP, along with the SS gave election tickets and the important posts in party organisation to the leaders belonging to the OBC castes.

In TN, since 1980s the Sangh Parivar organisations started to organise various sections of population. Thus, the VHP started to organise the pujaris in the village
temples across the state. The BJP hit upon various themes of the Tamil nationalism during 1990s like demanding that the Tamil should be given classical language status, the year 2000 should be declared as the Tamil year, it also tried to appropriate the image of Tamil saint poet Thiruvalluvar, who was a staple of the Tamil nationalism in the state. Kanchi Shankaracharya, who was initially a caste leader of the Smartha Brahmans sought to extend his constituency to the non Brahmans since late 1980s by initiating several social service activities for the poor and dalits. This Shankaracharya, at times was seen to be aligning himself with the Hindutva organisations like the VHP. Moreover, the two main Dravidian parties tried to accommodate the Hindutva ideology by adopting Hindutva stands on various occasions. Due to increasing political importance of the BJP at the national level politics, for both the main Dravidian parties it became an alternative to the Congress to make electoral alliance with. However, it only added legitimacy for the Hindutva political party in the political discourse of the state. According to N. Subramanian (1999), the DMK had built an organisational and ideological alliance between the OBCs and Muslims in the state during 1960s and 1970s. However, erosion in the ideological and organisational glue cementing this alliance during 1990s meant that DMK could make electoral alliance with the BJP and some OBC castes would vote for the BJP.

During early 1990s, the adoption of militant Hindu nationalism made it possible for the BJP to have upper caste votes in UP. Even though the Jan Sangh had a history of mobilizing the OBCs in the state, the fact that the Janata Dal and later Samajwadi Party (SP) of Mulayam Singh Yadav was identified with the OBC mobilisation in the state made it difficult for the BJP to expand its influence beyond the upper castes in the state. However, soon the SP was started to be perceived as being dominated by the Yadavs in its power structure. The BJP recruited the non Yadav OBCs into its organisation in order to woo this OBC vote.

III. The Impact

In Maharashtra, the Hindutva political parties could become important political force during 1990s. This was possible as the Hindutva political formations could garner significant votes from a section of Maratha as well as OBC voters. Both these sections voted for the Hindutva parties largely because they felt of being left out of the Congress power structure. Moreover, there is an evidence to suggest
that a significant section of OBC population had accepted Hindutva ideological
tenets during 1990s. Indeed the BJP and SS were able to make a dent on the
political and ideological ‘Bahujan’ consensus arrived at by the Congress after
1960.

In TN, although BJP was able to get support from a section of rich OBC castes, it
fell far short of getting any substantial support from the OBCs. However, one sees
a curious interaction between the ideologies of Dravidianism and Hindutva in the
state. In that, the BJP tried to accommodate the Dravidian ideology and the
Dravidian parties were seen to be making compromises with the Hindutva
ideology. Both these processes showed as to how a pan-Indian ideology had to
accommodate to the regional ideology in the process of intervening in the politics
of a state, and how the regional ideology is amenable to mutations when adjusting
with the all-India ideology.

In UP the BJP was able to garner a substantial proportion of non Yadav OBC
votes. However, in the process, a simmering conflict between the OBC and upper
caste leadership within the party came to the fore. This made BJP unstable and
weak in the state politics. The problems of the BJP got compounded when the SP
and the BSP started attempting to woo the upper castes behind them. In this
process, the BJP lost a substantial amount of the votes of upper castes and lower
OBCs.

**Fifth Chapter: Conclusion**

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, a comparison is made
between OBC political assertion in the three states, based upon what had been
explained and analysed in the second, third and fourth chapters. In the second
section, the OBC politics in these three states is examined with reference to a
larger question of Democratisation of Indian politics. In doing this, some
questions are asked to the OBC politics in the background of whatever had been
published on the functioning of democratic politics in India. This is done to
ascertain whether OBC political assertion in these three states had deepened
Indian democracy. If yes, what have been the degrees of this democratising in the
three states under our investigation? These questions would be discussed in
greater length in the concluding chapter.

In this chapter, a comparison between the OBC politics in the three states is made
on following lines:
I. The Historical Background

a. An alliance of the backward castes was built in Madras and Bombay province during the colonial period. This alliance was given non Brahman ideology and identity. In UP during colonial period an alliance between different backward castes did not take place. However, one witnesses organisation amongst some of the single backward castes. Thus in UP the identity was elongated from the sub caste to the larger caste like Yadav, though this elongation could not reach up to an alliance between different backward castes. The backward castes in UP were mobilised after freedom, that is since the decade of 1960s. Here they were organised as peasants, and not as backward castes.

b. The non Brahmans in the Madras and Bombay province developed their own alternative mythology. However, both the elements of radicalism and Sanskritisation were present amongst the non Brahman movement in these provinces. In UP, on the other hand, those single OBC castes got organised on the basis of Sanskritisation.

c. In the three of the states, the backward castes were organised politically against the Congress, at least initially. In Bombay and Madras province, the backward castes challenged the upper caste dominated Indian Nationalism and in UP, the backward castes opposed the Congress’ discourse on economic development of the Indian nation. Eventually, the backward caste politics in Bombay province got accommodated in the Congress. However, it was kept afloat in the Madras/Tamil Nadu and UP.

II. The Political Routes of the OBC Politics

During the post-Mandal era, the one-party dominance system in Maharashtra changed into multi-party system. However, in TN and UP, the two party systems changed into the multi-party system and two-alliance system respectively. The OBC politics in these three states contributed to this change in the political party system.

In the three states, the OBCs got their distinct political vehicles during the post-Mandal period. Further, the OBCs got politically fragmented into upper and lower OBCs and into different single caste OBCs during the 1990s in these three states. However, different political background in these three states meant that political party system emerging due to this process would be different. Thus, in Maharashtra, a stable multi-party system with a lot of instability at the local level
arose, in TN, a stable two alliance system with a lot of instability in the constituent parties emerged, and in UP, unstable multi-party system with instability in government formation resulted.

III. Mediating with Political Hindutva

On the basis of our study of interaction between the OBC and Hindutva politics in the three states during the post-Mandal period, some questions about this process may be raised. These questions are following:

a. Whether the prior existence of regional nationalism amongst the OBCs inhibited the spread of Hindutva as the latter is an all India ideology.

b. Whether the mutations in the regional nationalist ideology accommodates Hindutva in the ‘mainstream’ of regional nationalism.

c. Whether the existence of mobilisation by the Hindutva and /or semi-Hindutva political forces amongst the OBCs during the pre-Mandal period helps in entrenching Hindutva ideology amongst the OBCs during the post-Mandal era.

d. Does Hindutva political organisation get weakened under the load of conflict between the OBCs and upper castes within it? However, does Hindutva political organisation sustain itself despite conflict between the OBCs and dominant caste?

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