CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION

The political parties are an instrument of collective human actions not less than armies', bureaucracies and universities. The parties are mostly outgrowth of modernization, by which individual begins to participate in public life and the entire pattern of government. They are organized by politicians to win elections in the competitive system. In the authoritarian system, political parties are organized to affect the attitude and behaviour of the population. In other words, political parties are omnipresent in modern form of representative democracy, by which people, especially the voters, exercise their voting rights as well as their views, and opinions with regard to the formation of government and thus formulation of policies. The parties are political forces, which emerged in democracy, workable in its indirect form.

The Indian party system is unique and underwent transformation; since independence, as well as second half of the 1980’s, turned to multi-party system, in which all parties, either national or regional, compete for power at the Centre. The major structural changes in party system occurred, with the breakdown in ‘Congress system’ or one-party dominant system. The multiplicity of political parties emerged on the political horizon of the country; each one is still representing limited, social, economic, religious and cultural interests. These parties have a rather limited geographical expansion, mobilizing support on limited agenda and represent the interests of its main support group. The factionalism, defection, corruption, leadership conflicts and ideological ambiguity etc continue to be the inherent weakness of almost all parties in India.

The 13th, 14th and 15th Lok Sabha elections in 1999, 2004 and 2009 respectively, embarked on distinctly different phase of her democratic journey, with distinct change in party politics in the 21st century. Naturally, it brought comprehensive changes in political parties, their leadership, ideological profile, support base, programmatic content, their spread and reach across the country and above all, their members as well as in their texture of the party system in the country.\(^5\) Since independence, the party system passed through various phases or stages. It was a one party dominant system or Congress system, briefly a bi-party system, subsequently a multi-party system and then transformed to bi-polarity or ‘multiple bi-polarity’, or multi-polarity. The emergence of large number of parties on the Indian political canvas contained the possibility of the advent of ‘alliance formation’ and ‘coalition politics’, which became a political reality after 1996 parliamentary elections. In 15th Lok Sabha elections 2009, party system still moved towards alliance politics and alliance formation/ groups, led by national political parties, such as Congress led United Progressive Alliance (UPA), the BJP led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), CPI (M) led Third Front and Lalu-Paswan-Mulayam grouping, called the Fourth Front.\(^6\) Therefore, the Indian party system varied from time to time and passed through various stages/ phases.

The contemporary party system in the country was developed originally in the context of the struggle for freedom, and since 1950, within the framework of parliamentary form of government. Both, these circumstances exerted their influence on the present characters and structures of the parties.\(^7\) In course of time, various social, economic and political associations provided a firm base to party system in India. The founding of the Indian National Congress, by A.O. Hume in December 1885, was most important benchmark in the evolution of parties and party system in the country,\(^8\) as it set in motion, processes, on the one hand and was signal to number of ideas, to bloom, on the other. It also brought together different points of view, ideologies and in the process functioned as a composite party system.\(^9\)

\(^8\) Ajay K. Mehra, “Historical Development of Party Systems in India”, in Mehra, Khanna and Kueck, n.4, p.50.
\(^9\) Ibid., p.79.
**One Party Dominant System (1952-67)**

The Congress Party emerged as a principal political force in the country, with an overwhelming majority of seats at the Centre and in most of the states. Thus, in Lok Sabha, the party secured 364 seats out of 489 or 74.4 percentage of seats. In state assemblies, the INC won 2246 out of 3283 seats or 68.4 percentage of seats. The Congress Party held dominant position for next fifteen years, through three general elections and number of Vidhan Sabha elections in the states.\(^\text{10}\) In short, the party dominated both at the Centre as well as in number of states. It secured more than forty five percentage of popular votes casted in the first three parliamentary elections and became the ruling party in majority of the state legislatures.\(^\text{11}\)

**Polarization of Regional Political Parties (1967-77)**

This period was marked by transition from one dominant party system to competitive sharing of power. The results of 1967 parliamentary elections were dramatic. The Congress Party failed to secure majority in eight states, namely Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Kerala and Tamil Nadu out of sixteen states, on the one hand and its majority at the Centre was reduced to narrow margin of fifty four percentage Lok Sabha seats, on the other.\(^\text{12}\)

The regional and opposition parties entered into pre-poll and post-poll alliances in these states to dislodge the ruling Congress Party. In Kerala, the CPI (M), Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP), Republican Party and Muslim League, agreed to work together and formed alliance to defeat the ruling Congress. In Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Haryana and Madras, various regional and smaller parties forged alliances and then turning into coalition governments at the state levels. However, the Congress Party formed government with the support of independents and others in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.\(^\text{13}\) The national elections in 1971, saw a restoration of third Congress majority in Lok Sabha with 43.7 percentage of votes and 352 seats in the popular House. One of the key

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\(^\text{12}\) Narang, n.7, p. 324
factors in the resurgence of popularity of Congress Party, was charismatic personality or personality cult of Indira Gandhi and her slogan, ‘garibi hatao’ (remove poverty).\textsuperscript{14} After getting thumping majority in 1971 and 1972 parliamentary and state assemblies’ elections, respectively, “one party dominant system took shape to “one person dominant system”\textsuperscript{15}

**Growth of Bi-Party Situation (1977-79)**

The post emergency national elections held in 1977, ‘might’ initiate a bi-party system in country with the emergence of the Janata Party (JP), which came into picture, after merger of different parties such as Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD), Jan Sangh, and Congress (O) and Socialist Party. The Janata Party (JP) swept the polls, causing huge set-back to Congress dominance of early years.\textsuperscript{16} The Janata Party and Congress cornered between them 77.7 percentage of votes and 83.1 percentage of seats. Out of seventeen major states, both the parties got eighty percentage of votes in twelve states. In remaining five states namely Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, regional and Left parties emerged as dominant players.\textsuperscript{17} The bi-party situation did not continue because of disintegration of Janata Party.


The Congress Party won thumping two-thirds (2/3) majority in the Lower House with 351 seats out of 525, following disintegration of Janata Party in 1980 Lok Sabha elections. It continued in June 1980 state assemblies’ elections, except Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The new political trend once again showed the way to the one party dominance system in country.\textsuperscript{18}

The 8\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha elections in 1984, held soon after Indira Gandhi’s assassination, generated an unparalleled ‘pro-Congress wave’ across the country. As


\textsuperscript{17} Pai, n.3, p.166.

\textsuperscript{18} Asthana, n.16, p. 15.
a result, the Congress Party won largest ever majority of third-fourth (3/4) in the Lower House. The anti-Congressism at national level was virtually decimated.\textsuperscript{19} The Congress (I) under leadership of Rajiv Gandhi swept all state assembly elections across the country, except Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Sikkim. It was a hegemonic dominance, because of failure of non-Congress parties at national level, on the one hand and limited support base of regional political parties, on the other. In this phase, the party became dependent on leader as a hegemon.\textsuperscript{20}

**Emergence of Multi-Party System (1989-1996)**

The national elections of 1989 marked water shed in national politics in general and party system, in particular. For the first time since independence, a ‘hung Parliament’ was thrown in which no party got absolute majority.\textsuperscript{21} The Congress Party’s strength reduced to 39.5 percentage of votes with 197 seats in Lok Sabha and emerged as a single largest party in the popular House, but decided to sit in the opposition benches. The Janata Dal led National Front (comprising Janata Dal, regional and minor parties) formed the Union Cabinet under the leadership of V. P. Singh, supported from outside by both the BJP, on the right and the CPI and the CPI (M), on the left.\textsuperscript{22}

The V.P. Singh government lost ‘vote of confidence’ in the Parliament just after eleven months in November 1990, when, Bihar Janata Dal government decided to halt ‘Rath Yatra’ (chariot pilgrimage) by arresting BJP leader L.K. Advani in Bihar, with the specific approval of the central government. The arrest of L.K. Advani triggered the party’s withdrawal of support from the central government that very day. Thereafter, Chandra Shekhar faction formed a new Samajwadi Janata Party and constituted central government with the outside support of the Congress Party. The four month tenure of the Chandra Shekhar ministry was marked by controversy and suspicion among all the major parties. The arrangements between

\textsuperscript{20} Narang, n.7, p.327.
\textsuperscript{22} Rajni Kothari, “Governance: It is time to Go Back to the People”, *The Times of India*, 3 November 1997.
Chandra Shekhar government and the Congress Party were strained from the very beginning. The differences between the Indian National Congress (INC) and Union Cabinet revealed on the issue of Budget, which was not acceptable to the Congress Party. The INC was forced to present an interim rather than the regular Budget. The end of Chandra Shekhar ministry came quickly, asked the President of India to accept his resignation and called for fresh elections.23 So, the country was never governed by such a small group.

The mid-term elections held in May-June 1991, in the midst of which Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated, the Congress nevertheless returned to power with support of AIADMK and other smaller allies and formed minority government under its new leader P.V. Narasimha Rao.24 The verdict of 1996 parliamentary elections was unprecedented, marked by fragmentation and erosion. The political parties were not sure about their majority in the Lower House at their own resources, because they were facing internal contradictions, splits and factionalism. It was the time, when regional parties asserted themselves and challenging, not only the BJP’s constant rise, but also the very credibility of the Congress Party. As a result, the era of coalition politics started with a bang.


For the first time, the BJP emerged as a strongest and the single largest party by winning 161 Lok Sabha seats in the popular House and Congress placed second with 141 seats only. The INC debacle opened the flood gate of ‘power-brokering.’ The race for power was restricted only to the BJP and Left Front. Shankar Dyal Sharma, President of India, stuck to conventions by first inviting the single largest party, the BJP to form government and prove majority in the House of People by 31 May 1996. The BJP and its partners having only 195 members, which were very short of required numbers. Atal Bihari Vajpayee resigned just after thirteen days without trying his ministry strength on the floor of House.25

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Thereafter, President of India invited H.D. Deve Gowda, the consensual leader of United Front (UF) to form the government, which got outside support of the Indian National Congress (INC). Very soon, the United Front changed its guard under pressure of the Congress Party. As a result, Inder Kumar Gujral, became the next Prime Minister of United Front. However, Gujral ministry was not free from contradictions and splits. The Union Cabinet collapsed within a year, when Congress withdrew its support on 26 November 1997, on the ground of ouster of the DMK minister from Council of Ministers. These elections produced a new dimension in party system, i.e. an era of “bi-model multi-party system,” emerged, in which the BJP and the Congress were the two major parties surrounded by small regional parties.26

The BJP led combine occupied first place with 255 seats in the Lok Sabha in 1998 mid-term elections. The Congress Party and its allies got only 170 seats. The United Front washed away and retained only eighty three seats. As, no alliance or party gained an absolute majority in the popular House, President of India, K.R. Narayanan, invited A.B. Vajpayee, the leader of BJP parliamentary board, to form the government and would win a ‘vote of confidence’ on the floor of the Lower House.27 The BJP did it, with the support of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and others, particularly, when TDP’s candidate, G.M.C. Balayogi was elected as the Speaker of the House of People on 24 March 1998. The NDA partners, put pressure on central government for certain demands. Jayalalitha, President, AIADMK, an indispensable partner, with her twenty seven members of Parliament (MPs), adopted a problematic attitude towards Vajpayee government. Jayalalitha insisted on the dismissal of the DMK government in Madras, but Vajpayee did not agree. Jayalalitha withdrew support from Union Cabinet in April 1999, when, Prime Minister, refused to intervene to prevent government lawyers from pressing corruption cases against her.28 Consequently, the NDA ministry lost majority in the Lower House by one

vote, i.e. 269 votes casted in favour of the government, while 270 votes casted against. The long political drama came to end, with the dissolution of 12th Lok Sabha. The coalition politics ceased to be a momentary phenomenon and viable enough to tackle major difficulties. As a result, political parties had to reorient their thinking and mode of actions.29

The 1999 Lok Sabha elections marked a significant break in the succession of ‘hung Parliament’. The state parties aggressively pursuing the development interest of their respective areas, joined hands with the BJP, marked the advent of ‘electoral federalism’, through skillful bargaining into areas which had hitherto, resisted its effort at expansion. The major national party pursued a comprehensive strategy of alliance and seat sharing arrangement by accepting to field, fewer candidates in the bargain. In a way, the BJP decided to field 340 candidates only in 1999 elections as compared to 384 in 1998 and 471 in 1996.30 A new structural development took place in Indian party system, when a combination of more than twenty parties, decided to jointly contest the elections on the formula of seats sharing arrangement, to avoid confrontation and had Common Minimum Programme (CMP) and where all the partners agreed to project Vajpayee as the Prime Ministerial candidate in 13th parliamentary elections.

The NDA secured clear mandate in 13th Lok Sabha, which was more durable than its previous experience, because of thirty-plus members in the Lower House. The INC faced a stunning blow, due to extension of party’s current ideology, with the wishes and whims of Sonia Gandhi and her family.31 The Congress Party registered its worst ever performance wining only 114 seats in the House of People.

**Emergence of Bi-Polar led National Alliance System (2004 to 2009)**

A very narrow range of outcomes came to the fore in 14th general elections, between the NDA’s ‘defeat’ and the UPA’s victory. The tally of Congress Party and its allies was 222, with a combined vote share of 36.5 percentage. The party improved its

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tally from 114 seats to 145, an improvement of thirty one seats as compared to the 1999 parliamentary elections. The NDA got 189 seats only and there was real decline in its popular vote share, from 40.8 percentage to 35.9 percentage, a fall of 4.9 percentage. The BJP on its own, lost forty four seats to finish at 138, compared to the 182 in the previous 13th Lok Sabha elections of 1999. This indicated a real erosion of its popular support base. The allies of BJP lost much more in term of seats, as their tally fell from 144 seats to just fifty one Lok Sabha seats.32 On the other side, the Congress’ allies, DMK, TRS, NCP and RJD won 118 seats for the UPA, sealing the fate of the NDA.33

The anti-NDA parties showed their full faith in the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and agreed to form the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). The Left parties also decided to support the UPA government from outside, but accepted the post of the Speaker. On 22 May 2004, the Congress Party led UPA, one of the largest combinations of eighteen parties, formed Council of Ministers, under the Prime Ministership of Manmohan Singh. Sonia Gandhi was made the chairperson of the UPA and specially constituted body-National Advisory Committee (NAC), to look after the functioning of the government. A Common Minimum Programme was devised to run government, on certain accounts. The Manmohan Singh government confronted with various problems, which came from partners, particularly from the Left parties. They had divergent views on foreign policy and economic reforms. The Left Front decided to withdraw support from the UPA on the issue of Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal on 9 July 2008. However, Prime Minister and its colleagues managed to win ‘vote of confidence’ with the support of Samajwadi Party (SP), Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) and Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) in July 2008.

The 15th Lok Sabha elections was over on 13 May 2009, by going through five phases. The average vote percentage in the elections happened to be around fifty seven percentage.34 Unlike 2004 national elections, almost all parties hedged their bets, leaving room for post-electoral possibilities. Both, the Bharatiya Janata

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Party (BJP) and the Congress Party shed baggage, primarily to Third Front. The national elections of 2009, saw a strange mixture of old and new, short-term and long-term friends, alliances and enemies, bound with or against each other, making it one of the most puzzling and complex elections. There was “no national level alliance,” but only region specific. Both the alliance maker parties, as the BJP and the Congress, and even the Left Front, preferred alliance only to bridge ‘territorial gap.’ Neither the BJP, nor the Congress Party, even the CPI (M) was willing to cede space in their respective areas of strength, to their friends or allies. The Fourth Front formed by the trio leadership of Lalu-Paswan-Mulayam, on the basis of allies, not encroached each other’s space and was limited to their specific regions.  

The Congress Party already declared in January 2009 that there would be no national level alliance, but seat sharing adjustments would be restricted to regional levels. Similarly, the BJP alliance arrangement was limited to region specific. The Third Front failed to take any concrete shape, despite the efforts made by Left parties particularly, the CPI (M) and the CPI. It is because, the constituents of Third Front particularly, CPI (M) looked forward to the post-poll scenario, throughout its electoral campaign. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), claimed to support the Third Front, but refused to have an alliance. However, it lacked a formal organization, which took place after the elections. In the meantime, each of its constituents engaged in friendly contest with non-Congress and non-BJP parties. Each partner of Third Front fought the elections on its own in their respective states and then to form a formal organization.

The national elections in 2009, produced surprised results. The predictions proved to be unrealistic. The Congress Party led multi-party United Progressive Alliance won spectacular victory, with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh set to form government at the Centre for second time. It was a huge set back to the NDA on the

36 Ibid.
one hand; and the CPI (M) led Third Front decimated, on the other.\textsuperscript{39} The UPA had a tally of 262 seats, with Congress Party, itself getting 206 Lok Sabha seats. The NDA got only 157 seats, with BJP’s own score being 116. While, the Third Front reduced to just eighty seats. The Fourth Front sought to develop a separate political identity, in order to enhance its bargaining power with the Congress, brought down to just twenty seven Lok Sabha seats.\textsuperscript{40}

The anti-incumbency factor turned out, and non-workable in 15\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha elections. The people ignored rhetoric, judged candidates on the basis of performance and casted their votes. That is why; it turned out to be one of the remarkable elections. For the first time, since 1967, an incumbent government was re-elected into the office, without an emotive issues like war of 1971 and 1999 Kargil War or the assassination of Prime Ministers such as Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. The combination of clean image of the Prime Ministerial candidate Manmohan Singh and suddenly energized Rahul Gandhi did the trick. The Indian National Congress (INC) leadership was successful to cash implementation of various schemes of UPA-I government such as National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and Rs. 60,000 crores loan waiver plan to farmers.\textsuperscript{41} The NREGA helped a lot it in the 2009 general elections like the ‘garibi hatao’ (remove poverty) slogan of Indira Gandhi in 1971. The only difference between the two is that the latter was a ‘mere slogan’, whereas the former worked practically for the welfare of the marginalized sections.

As a result, a large part of rural India voted for the Congress Party. The Civil-Nuclear Deal with USA proved less important for rural people than the NREGA. The poor masses in rural areas first needed food and then electricity. However, the electorates in urban areas seemed to support the latter issues. The parties, which opposed the Civil-Nuclear Deal alleging the surrender of national sovereignty to American neo-imperialism, were openly branded as anti-national, anti-development and pro-China by the national media. The Congress Party grabbed most of the seats in urban areas particularly the national capital Delhi and the

\textsuperscript{39} The Times of India, 17 May 2009.
\textsuperscript{40} Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, “Congress Resurgence”, Frontline, Vol.26, No.11, 5 June 2009, p.4.
financial capital-Mumbai.\textsuperscript{42} The election results underline the facts that Congress Party gained maximum and crossed 200 mark. The party strategy of alliance formation paid it a rich dividend. It forged state level alliance where it required the support, and party abstained from alliance where party tried to strength its position particularly in cow belt.\textsuperscript{43}

In brief, parliamentary elections in 2009 changed the nature of political competition among the political parties. There were seven national political parties, thirty eight regional parties and more than 1000 register parties in the race for power at the Centre. The main contender was three-the NDA, the UPA and the Third Front. The Left Front and other regional parties tried to occupy non-Congress and non-BJP space by bringing new issues, new leaders and fresh energy to politics such as pro-Mandal movement, campaign against new economic policies and the agitations on question of ‘jal’, ‘jungle’ and ‘jameen’ (water, forest and land). Ironically, this space failed to take place only benefiting one the Congress.\textsuperscript{44}

The two major alliances of national parties as the Congress Party led UPA and the BJP led NDA, got most of the seats in the Lower House and the state assemblies. The Third Front managed to save its hold in some regions, but did not perform on expectations. The partners of Fourth Front particularly the RJD and the LJP were decimated but the Samajwadi Party (SP) able to retain its strong hold in Uttar Pradesh. The regional player turned around the coalition maker for better bargaining and strong parliamentary presence. The party system in India is moving towards “bi-polarity”, i.e. one pole represented by the Congress Party and the other pole headed by the BJP. The regional parties and caste based parties have only limited choice to make alliance either with the BJP or the Congress Party. These points need to be investigated further.

\textsuperscript{42} Sitaram Kumbhar, “Has the Congress Earned Dividend from the NREGA”, \textit{Mainstream}, Vol. XLVII, No. 23, 23 May 2009, p.11.
\textsuperscript{43} Roy, n.37, p.38.
\textsuperscript{44} Yogendra Yadav, “Making Sense of the Verdict”, \textit{The Hindu}, 18 May 2009.
Review of Literature

Wallace and Roy,45 study the factors, which influenced electorates during the 15th Lok Sabha elections in 2009 and how these polls were an important contribution to India’s democracy. Wallace in “Introduction” finds out that the Congress Party gambled successfully on a minimum, rather than a maximum winning coalition. Initially, the party allied with a few partners in minimal winning coalition so as to highlight the Congress Party, rather than the UPA. The CPI (M) lost heavily at national level as well as in its core states of West Bengal and Kerala. The BJP electoral performance continued on decline from 182 in 1999, to 138 in 2004, and to 116 in 2009. Most of the regional parties in the north, like Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), did not perform on expectations in 2009 national elections. Other regional parties, as Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) did well, but all these forces continued to be a major player in their respective region. The coalition politics made them national players.

Ramashray Roy in his article “Regional Base and National Dream: Alliance Formation, 2009 National Elections,” argues that states emerged as autonomous arenas, which influenced outcomes of general elections in 2009, along with the phenomena of ‘multiple-bipolarity of parties.’ The regional leaders display growing confidence and escalating ambitions for playing, even an effecting role in national politics. They became bolder in their imagining as ‘kingmaker’, even as kings and queens. As a result, the fragmentation of the political space, into myriad parties, in contention for political power got frozen. Roy further highlights the fact that there were no overarching issues in 2009 general elections, the outcome of polls was just the aggregation of state results.’

The process of ‘regionalization of the national political parties’ and ‘nationalization of the regional political parties, started in parliamentary elections in 2009.’ It reflected in the electoral discourse melt down, in the power sharing coalition matrix, observed by Pramod Kumar in another article, “Coalition Politics: Withering of National-Regional Ideological Positions?” The scholar underlines the

fact that the strength of the national political parties in Parliament decreased from eighty five percentage to sixty nine percentage whereas, positions of regional parties, increased from twelve percentage to twenty nine percentage in 1984 to 2009 national elections. The ideological differences between political parties got blurred, while, the differences between populist and state politics, became more manifest.

The paper on “Federalism, Party System and Structural Changes in India”, by Maneesha Roy concludes that there was transformation in Indian party system from multi-party system to ‘regionalized multi party-configuration.’ This situation had certain ramifications on the working of federal principles such as the distribution of power and the center-state relations. It encouraged the transition of the Indian political system from ‘quasi-federation’ to ‘quasi-confederacy’.

Rainuka Dagar in “Gender Discourse in Elections: Constructing a Constituency?”, states that fifty one women elected to 15th Lok Sabha in 2009, was the largest ever representation in Parliament. However, the women right issues remained the personal agenda of candidates during elections. In another study, the structure, electoral strategies, policies, programmes and electoral performance of the BSP, discussed by Christophe Jaffrelot in the essay, “The BSP in 2009: Still Making Progress, But Only as a Dalit Party.” Mayawati, BSP supremo, shifted her party strategy from caste to class and from a ‘bahujan’- center repertoire to more open, as early as the mid-2000, i.e. party shifted her stand from ‘bahujan’ to ‘sarajan samaj’ (all society). That is why; Mayawati dreamed to become the first dalit Prime Minister of India, but got only twenty one Lok Sabha seats in 2009 national elections. The party did not perform on expectations, because, Mayawati’s state government implemented policies in Uttar Pradesh, primarily only for the dalits. The author believes that the BSP will succeed if it builds a robust party structure.

The above volume contains seventeen articles by a galaxy of scholars broadly divided into two parts. The first part related to thematic studies, looking at India as a whole. The second section deals with analytical studies of selected state’s party system or regional politics/parties. The second part, further subdivided into three sections on the basis of one ‘favoured’ party system, alternative bi-party system and multi-party system existed in following states. Ghanshyam Shah and
Amiya K. Chaudhuri, discuss about one favoured (dominant) party system in Gujarat and West Bengal. Bhawani Singh and Vibhuti Singh Shekhawat, G. Gopa Kumar, Raghavendra Keshavarao Hebsur and Karli Srinivasulu, define the dynamic of alternative bi-party system in Rajasthan, Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, respectively. There were multi-cornered electoral contests in Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, explored by Praveen Krishna Swami and Rajesh Dev. There are some minor typing errors in the book.

Lawrence Saez and Gurharpal Singh, highlight the outcome of 2009 general elections, which produced a degree of systemic stability in the governance. A governing coalition could complete a full term in the office and re-elected. The scholars explore the relationship between the state and politics in three critical areas-governance, secularism and security. These three features constituted important fault lines between the two main national political parties, namely the Congress Party and the BJP in India. In other words, the experts compare and contrast the performance of the NDA and the UPA-I, on the ground of governance, secularism and security of the country. James Manor in his study, “Did the Central Government’s Poverty Initiatives Help to Re-elect it,” concludes, that the capacity of the Congress Party and its allies to reap electoral benefits from the central government’s poverty scheme, was diluted somewhat by the ability of some anti-Congress state governments to claim popular credit for these schemes themselves. The UPA-I promised, Common Minimum Programme, to reverse the communalization of the Indian education system, brought by the previous NDA government in 1999, demonstrated by Shailaja Fennell, in “Educational Exclusion and Inclusive Development in India.” In the other essay, Gurharpal Singh in “UPA and Secularism”, investigates that one of the major policy division between the NDA and the UPA, before the 2004 national elections, centered on commitment to state secularism.

Rochana Bajpai, in “Beyond Identity? UPA Rhetoric on Social Justice and Affirmative Action,” finds out that both the NDA and the UPA-I, promoted identity based reservations, and supported different social groups, such as Scheduled Castes

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(SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), and religious minorities, respectively, because of their ideological differences. In the next paper, “The UPA’s Foreign Policy, 2004-09” by Kanti Bajpai reveals that the UPA and the NDA conducted foreign policy in different manner. The BJP was more realist in its focus on relative power and the military instrument of influence, while Congress Party stressed upon negotiations and diplomacy. In last two essays, Lawrence Saez and Rahul Roy Chaudhury, discuss the issues of India’s energy security and terrorism, respectively. Most of the scholars used tables; statistical data and various kinds of charts, which make the study more fascinating and interesting.

Kanchan Chandra,\(^{47}\) expresses that ethnic parties are growing across the democratic world, particularly in Canada, Spain, Israel, Sri Lanka, Macedonia, South Africa, Russia, United Kingdom and India. An ethnic party is a party that overtly represents the cause of one particular ethnic category or set of categories, to the exclusion of the other and that makes such a representation central to its strategy of mobilizing voters. The author tries to answer why such ethnic party succeed or fail. An ethnic party is likely to succeed, when it has competitive rule for intra-party advancement and when the size of the ethnic group(s), seeks to mobilize, exceed the threshold of winning or leverage imposed by the electoral system. The scholar quoted the examples of the success of the Janata Party in 1977, the BJP in 1991 and the TDP in 1994, the victory of these parties did not lay in the issues, that each party or alliance represented, but changes in the ethnic categories, that each party or alliance attempted to represent prior to the elections. Chandra evaluates the performance of the BSP from 1984 to 1998. It also includes, other three ethnic parties, namely Bharatiya Janata Party (Hindu party), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (linguistic party) and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (Jharkhandis). The volume is divided into two sections. The first deals with conceptual framework and second part concerns, data interpretations. The different kind of charts, tables, maps, statistical data and mathematical interpretations make the study more effective.

Mukherjee, Chandra and Mridula,\(^{48}\) cover variety of issues like foreign policy, defence, nuclear security, elections and party system, which affected Congress Party and impinged on national polity from 1964 to 1984. This period was largely dominated by Indira Gandhi, who did not receive a balanced treatment, partially because of intense heat generated by cataclysmic events like ‘Emergency,’ ‘Operation Blue Star’ and ‘anti-Sikh riots’ following Indira Gandhi’s assassination in 1984. The nineteen papers contributed by well-known journalists, historians, and psephologists, like Bipan Chandra, V.P. Dutt, B.G. Verghese and Aparna Basu etc to the volume. Inder Malhotra, in his paper “Indira Gandhi: An overview”, throws light on the life of Indira Gandhi, who dominated the Indian scene like a colossus, irrespective of whether she was in power or out of it. Sudha Pai, in her article “The Congress Party and Six National Elections: 1964-1984”, examines the performance of the INC in six parliamentary elections held between 1964 and 1984. According to the scholar, it was a volatile period because single dominant party model of the Nehru era was challenged and redefined over next two decades. The developments within polity and society checked the Congress Party dominance and the beginning of a more broad based multi-party system particularly in the states. By and large, the book attempts to weave together the major developments, challenges, successes and failure of the period, so the students can understand the role of the Congress Party.

Csaba Nikolenyi,\(^{49}\) traces that the number of parties increased in India, as a result of unexpected consequence of the constitutional amendment in 1985, which conceived to curtail party defections. The author divided the Indian polity or party system into two parts, on the basis of the number of parties. Firstly, the majoritarian period from 1952 to 1984 and secondly, the period of elusive majority from 1989 to 2004. In majoritarian period, India had less number of effective parties in Parliament than any other multi-party system of West European. In the era of elusive majorities, the Indian party system became the most fragmented party system like Portugal. The author compares and contrasts Indian party system with Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France and Italy etc. The argument of the scholar is supported by statistical tables and charts.


Andrew Wyatt,\textsuperscript{50} explores that how party system came into being and changed over time in Tamil Nadu. The leaders are considered as asset or a liability, when parties compete with other parties. Wyatt considers political leaders as political entrepreneurs, with potential to bring changes in party system. They do this by forming new parties. The new parties are likely to emerge when political entrepreneur see that parties are overlooking important issues and their careers are blocked. The Indian party system made the transition from a “two and half party system to bi-polar multi-partism” states by Wyatt. The new parties such as Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), Dalit Panther Iyyakkam also known as Viduthali Chiruthaigal (DPI) and Puthiya Thamizhagam (PT) were fairly thriving in Tamil Nadu since 1989, which seemed a counter-intuitive outcome.

The alternation in power between two robust Dravidian parties, and the corresponding weakness of Congress Party, between 1967 and the early 1990s, highlighted that Tamil Nadu was not a state in which party system fragmentation seemed likely. Recent events confounded the expectation that voting along caste line would be disrupted by economic and social changes. Broadly, the volume is divided into two parts. The first section concerned with the contribution of political entrepreneur to emergence of new parties in the state. The second part explains the success of new parties, by comparing the careers of successful and failed political entrepreneurs.

K. Shankar Bajpai,\textsuperscript{51} compares and contrasts Indian democracy with American democracy. Both the countries do not meet the same standard of comparability, but have number of common characteristics. The eight articles are written in the volume, which cover various issues, such as religious pluralism, linguistic diversity, federalism and party system. E. Sridharan’s paper on “Democracy within Parties and the Accommodation of Diversity,” draws the conclusion that the two American parties were opposite to Indian parties, in terms of decentralization and internal democracy, with respect to nominations and finance. In other words, there is a trend towards decentralization and greater internal democracy.


in the West over the past four decades. The issue of internal democracy in parties is vital for India for several reasons.

Brahmachary,\textsuperscript{52} is of the view that the Indian society was fractured with meticulous planning on the pretext of class, caste, religion, community and ethnicity etc. There are other loopholes, which are still exploited by politicians, just to realize the dream of power, reap monetary harvest and remain perpetually at the helm of affairs. Brahmachary studies various aspects of Indian party system and highlights various malpractices. The scholar finds out that CPI(M) won elections in West Bengal, because it could cheat better than its rival by applying the formula of $D+L+A+VL=60,000$ votes in each constituency. It did in following steps:

**First**, D and L- stand for ‘delete’ and ‘left’, respectively. The name of died voters as well as those who left (L) the area/constituency were not deleted. The D+L factor is identified three months in advance.

**Second**, A- stands for agents. The polling agents of the rival parties were either controlled by bribe or threats. The idea is to ensure that polling agents of rival groups did not create fuss during the bogus voting at the polling booth.

**Third**, VL- it relates to rivals. The parties zero in on voters sympathetic to rivals and try to get their names off the electoral rolls. This step was executed during revision of rolls.

**Fourth**, the supporters of the ruling party took inordinately long time to cast their votes, on the hope that people would tire and leave the polling booth. Therefore, it is an art by which party with the best organization and cadre gains the most. The scholar tries to establish that over the years, the steel frame (bureaucracy) of the country lost its strength and senility, unable to carry the load, which was expected by the founders of Indian democracy. Brahmachary suggests that parties should understand the spirit of C\textsuperscript{3}, i.e. consensus, cooperation and comprehension.

Ajay K. Mehra,\textsuperscript{53} evaluates pre and post poll scenario of 2009 parliamentary elections, throws open several prospects of fractious alliances and even as aligning together, becomes compulsion. In this situation, no one knew as to who was with whom, and who would eventually go with whom. According to the author, contradictions, weak organizational structure, centralized, concentrated and familial leadership are the problems of almost all the political parties. The two nodal national parties namely the Congress and the BJP were in fractious situation with their partners. The re-emergence of the Third Front added bargaining power to regional allies viza-a-viz the nodal parties. As a result, post-poll possibility was now, wide open. The cloak of ideology and principles were completely off. The parties and leaders now, openly admit to game of power and for smaller and regional parties were amenable to coalition nexus.

Ashutosh Kumar’s paper on “Coping with the Delimitation: New Electoral Strategies,” presents the case of the fourth delimitation of electoral constituencies, which changed the electoral map of the country, well before 2009 national polls. It was an impact upon the fortunes of political parties, candidates and Indian polity. Consequently, the delimitation exercise erased ‘safe constituencies’ of many political stalwarts and backbone of their parties. In nut-shell, many politicians lost their ‘carefully nurtured constituencies’, as now the constituencies fell into the reserved category or merged with other or were simply split. In the emerging scenario, the delimitation exercise could prove decisive factor in determining the electoral outcome of the 15\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha.

In the article “Economic Issues in the Electoral Arena: Party Programmes and the Politics of Development,” by O.P. Sharma elaborates the emerging trends and economic agenda of main parties in the electoral fray, might shape the 2009 general elections. Kailash K. K. in his study “The Emerging Politics of Cohabitation: New Challenges,” explains the politics of cohabitation, throws light on the multiple role that parties could simultaneously play in the federal system, i.e., the parties in government at one level, could be in opposition, at another level. The parties in a coalition had life before coalition, have a life within as well as outside

the coalition also, all three being lived simultaneously. Therefore, new rule of the coalition game emerged in 2009 general elections. The author distinguishes between coalition makers and coalitionable parties in new party system. The BJP and the Indian National Congress (INC) are still the key coalition makers. There are fourteen papers in the volume, covering various aspect of Indian polity such as dalit politics, economic issues, foreign policy, role of diaspora in regional as well as national politics and gender issues, Muslim and tribal politics etc by a battery of scholars.

Singh and Saxena,⁵⁴ make a study of three parliamentary elections 1996, 1998 and 1999, held within a short span of time. The mid-term elections of 1999 marked continuity of federal-coalition governance, within the framework of multi-party system. The polls held in this phase, both causes and consequences, for paradigm-shift in Indian polity from predominantly tenor of politics to more federalized regime, within the overall parameters of what Ronald Watts characterized as ‘parliamentary federal system.’ It opened the door to political instability, chaos and breakthrough into the threshold of federal coalitional power sharing. The authors review various aspects of electoral process, from the roots of electoral patterns and voter alignments, in relationship with social cleavages. Singh and Saxena treat elections as focal points of decisive and redefining moment in the Indian political system, in terms of selection of candidates by political parties, party manifestos and various issues, raised in electoral campaigns and the factors, which influenced the electoral outcome and emergent coalition parliamentary federal framework of governance. The scholars are of the view that in the present scenario, the spirit of coalition politics guided parties, while embarking upon, forming the government at the Centre.

Jayal and Mehta,⁵⁵ elaborate that Indian politics is shaped by the long term structural features of the society. The social hierarchies, economic possibilities and historical legacies influenced the nature and character of the democracy. The Indian political system did well in various fields particularly voter turnout, turnover of incumbents, empowering new groups, maintaining a set of liberal freedom, civilian

control over armed forces and political contestation etc. The volume covers wide ranging issues from elections to economic reforms, business and politics to redistribution and social justice, coalition politics to judicial activism and foreign policy. In other words, the book contains thirty eight essays contributed by well known experts, namely Partha Chatterjee, Atul Kohli, James Manor, John Harrisson, Neera Chandhoke and Rob Jenkins etc. These articles are broadly divided into eight parts. The first part devoted to the institutional setting, second deals with social cleavages; identity and politics, third section covers political processes, fourth concerned with ideological contestation in Indian politics, and so on. The two essays—“The Party System” and “Political Parties” analyzed by E. Sridharan and Zoya Hasan, respectively.

E. Sridharan provides long range overview of the process of fragmentation of the Indian party system at national level since independence. The fragmentation of the party system at national level is the product of its opposite party system at the state level, that is, the concentration of votes between two parties or alliances, but different pairs of parties or alliances in most of the state’s, leading to multitude of parties at national level, each party with a limited support base in one or few states. Zoya Hasan argues that Indian parties are more pragmatic than ideological, which makes boundaries of parties highly flexible and permeable. In short, the political parties underwent a gradual transformation from ‘policy oriented parties to office seeking parties.’ Yogendra Yadav in his paper “Representation” states that first-past-the-post system did not produce anything like bi-party system at national level, an extended period of one party dominance, gave way to multi-party system, with one of the highest number of political parties among the electoral democracies of the world.

Thakurta and Raghuraman,56 explain that Indian polity entered into the era of coalition politics, here to stay and is maturing day by day. The political parties are becoming, increasingly adept at managing contradictions and are now even able to co-exist at the Union level with their major rivals in the states. The scholars forcefully argue that Indian polity is not becoming bi-polar one, because it overlooks

the fact that coalition politics can create compulsions for the larger party to woo the smaller one and not the other way around. There are strong indications that the process of fragmentation of polity is far from over. There are eleven chapters in the volume, which deal with national as well as regional parties as the UPA, the BJP, the Left parties, the Congress Party, the TDP, the SAD, the NCP, the BJD, the DMK, the AIADMK, the Shiv Sena and the Trinamool Congress etc. The last two chapters compare and contrast the performance of the NDA and the UPA. The scholars believe that the coalition governments were unstable because these were forged after elections rather than before them.

Ashutosh Varshney,\textsuperscript{57} expresses views on Indian polity, which cover wide range of themes such as federalism, pressure groups, democratization, caste, identity politics, party system and so on. The author brings together the ideas of prominent scholars like Gabriel A. Almond, Lucian W. Pye, James Manor, Kanchan Chandra and Steven I. Wilkinson etc. The volume is divided into three parts. First part, deals with party politics and democracy. The second covers ethnic politics and diversity with reference to leading dalit/scheduled caste party of India, particularly the BSP. The last section devoted to political economy. Baldev Raj Nayar in his article “BJP’s Economic Nationalism in Theory and Practice,” illustrates that the BJP could not afford to be ideologically pure and did not force an ideologically motivated economic policy on its coalition partners. According to Nayar, the BJP adopted pragmatist approach towards economic policy rather than strict to ‘\textit{swadeshi’}. More or less, the Congress Party and the BJP after 1991, largely agreed on liberalization. The papers in the book pay rich tribute to and build upon Weiner’s insight, ideas and arguments about Indian politics.

Ramesh Gupta,\textsuperscript{58} examines 14\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha elections in a chronicle order and how Sonia Gandhi came into politics. According to the scholar, Sonia Gandhi gave new lease of life to the Congress Party and adopted coalition mantra, which became essential for the formation of the UPA governments. The first success for the Indian National Congress (INC) under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi, came from Delhi, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh assembly elections, slowly and surely fifteen state


\textsuperscript{58} Ramesh Gupta, \textit{Sonia in Command}, Delhi: Indian Publisher, 2005.
assemblies came into the party’s fold. But, Sharad Pawar and P.A. Sangma revolted against her on the issue of foreign origin, on the one side; the BJP also raised the same issue in 1999 general elections, on the other. However, Sonia Gandhi declined the post of Prime Minister and threw the BJP on the backfoot. The outcome of the 14th Lok Sabha revealed that the Congress Party was not dead, it could lead country. Gupta finds out that there were 120 members of Parliament (MPs) from different parties as Bahujan Samaj Party, Samajwadi Party and Left parties elected to 14th Lok Sabha, after defeating Congress Party’s candidates, and the INC got only 145 seats in the Lower House. According to the scholar, the Indian National Congress fielded 417 candidates in 2004 parliamentary elections but won just 145 seats, which was less than thirty five percentage. The Congress Party claimed an outright victory but it was exaggerated. The party emerged as single largest party but its victory was not only incomplete but also not truly representative. For example, the INC decimated in Orissa, Karnataka, Punjab, West Bengal and Kerala. Even the Congress Party in Maharashtra and Gujarat managed to retain second place in term of seats. The fact is that the Congress Party was simply stitching up alliances, better than other parties particularly the BJP, that paid rich dividends on voting day. However, the author also evaluates the policies and programmes of UPA-I. However, the arguments of the author are not supported by any references.

Bhambhri,59 evaluates the democratic-electoral process of the national, regional and local levels from Kashmir to Kanaykumari. The scholar explains the negative and positive developments of last sixty years from Jawaharlal Nehru to Sonia Gandhi’s phase of politics. The decline of the Congress Party, lead to the rise of coalition government at the Centre, which began with V.P. Singh ministry in 1989 to Manmohan Singh government in 2004. These coalition governments were either unstable or stable, it is very difficult to make any generalization about the longevity of the coalition governments. According to the author, the Congress Party was an important player in Indian polity, even though the party was in power or in the opposition from 1989 to 2004. The scholar also analyses the performance of the NDA and the UPA-I governments. Bhambhri highlights that there are still various unsolved social crisis, which are quite deep rooted, because statusquoist social

forces had complete control over the state apparatus and the path of globalization will further accentuate disparities in India.

Bhambhri, in his another volume demystify the reality of coalition system of government at the Centre and the role of regional political parties, which are participants in governance at the Centre. Every political party, all India and regional is a representative of various strata of the ruling and exploiting classes, that is, the reason every national party like the Congress or the BJP did not face any difficulty while sitting with different groups and parties in a coalition government. The UPA-II government consisted of disparate groups, which worked on the basis of ‘adhocism in governance,’ because they had nothing in common. The UPA-II government seemed to lose its will to govern the country and they were engaged only in fire fighting (scholar covered the period from 2009-2011). The domestic and foreign policy of the Manmohan Singh government was directionless state’s Bhambhri, in his new book. It is broadly divided into two sections. The first part deals with national and state politics. The second section concerns with foreign policy. The arguments of the scholar in this volume are based on the leading newspapers particularly The Pioneer, The Economic Times and Hindustan Times on ascending dates and events.

Ganguly, Diamond and Plattner, discover various challenges to Indian democracy in the new millennium. The authors believe that human rights, institutional efficacy and secularism did significant impact on future working of democracy. The study is divided into four parts. The first section related with the evolution of party system since independence and its impact on democracy. M. V. Rajeev Gowda and E. Sridharan, in the essay, “Parties and the Party System, 1947-2006,” explain the reasons for the fragmentation of Indian party system and concomitant rise of regional parties. The second section deals with the state, the third with society and the final section covers economy and its impact on socio-political system.

Hazell and Yong, 63 outline the functioning of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in Britain and its impact on Parliament as well as the civil services. David Cameron government was based on sound coalition pacts and elaborated paperwork. Hazell makes four recommendations for the future, i.e., write a manifesto, which is not just geared towards single party majority government, parties prior to election is to maintain good relation with the leaders of other parties, because they might become part of negotiations. This is a lesson for Indian coalition, to heed for its own survival.

L.K. Advani, 64 in his autobiography, narrates various events such as partition of India, Emergency, fall of Janata government and birth of Bharatiya Janata Party, problems of Punjab and Kashmir, Ayodhya movement and ‘Rath Yatra’, Kargil war, Agra summit, Gujarat riots, cross-border terrorism, formation of the Commission namely, Review of the Working of the Indian Constitution, the BJP’s rise to power and its defeat in 2004 polls as well as turmoil in party and controversial remark of Advani on Mohammed Ali Jinnah at Jinnah’s Mausoleum in Karachi etc, from childhood to writing of the book. L.K. Advani categorizes his life journey into five broad phases from 1927 to 2007. The book was a calculated effort in pursuit of Advani’s desperate ambition to acquire an image, which could facilitate his rise to power in 2009 polls, but it could not help him for three reasons; his baggage of old was heavy; he did not discard it; and his techniques in debate only inspired distrust, to quote the author.

Teginder, 65 opines that regional political parties emerged as major political actors in national polity after 1996 parliamentary elections. These regional parties made various endeavors to share power at union level and sought to control government at regional levels. The regional parties played a vital role in forming the central government, in policy making, in laying out the governing agenda; in checking unilateral decisions of the Centre and protecting the regional interests, which are still essential for cooperative federalism. The scholar examines the electoral performance of SAD, AGP, TDP, Shiv Sena, DMK and AIADMK.

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Teginder uses empirical data of elections from 1952 to 2004 to analyze the role of regional parties in national polity.

Paul Wallace and Ramashray Roy,\textsuperscript{66} study parliamentary elections of 1999, which brought changes in the nature of Indian politics, both at the state and national levels, i.e. one party dominance to “catch-all-party” coalition. It was a clear reformation of the party system, which was evident at the turn of the century. The Congress Party was no longer at the center of the system. The parliamentary elections of 1996 and more emphatically 1998 and 1999, reduced the role of Congress Party. The Third Front functionally equivalent to third major party system, no longer exist. The Janata Dal split into regional groups, each of which pursued its own tactics and agendas. According to the authors, regional parties held the balance of power, necessary for the formulation of a ruling coalition. The power considerations, rather than ideology or specific issues; tended to dominate alliance choices and their reluctance to merge with larger party.

Wallace highlights the facts, that leadership, rather than institutionalization of parties, appears to be increasing importance and most difficult to evaluate, in terms of impacting on parties and alliance system. The alliance cohesion depends on the ability of the leadership to reach out in a non-ideological manner to its members, as well as to maintain its core party support. The leadership needs skillful, special handling and counter-veiling political pressures. Wallace extends his studies at state level as well and concludes that south India represented most significant changes in terms of party politics. The BJP formerly marginal to four southern state, was now a significant player in Tamil Nadu, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. As a result, the NDA made impressive gains in these states in 1999 general elections. The north was the major support area for the BJP and its predecessor Jan Sangh. The BJP and its partners performed well in other parts of the country. The other scholars explain many aspect of India’s current political scenario, such as caste, ethnicity and religion, as also increasing ‘communalization of politics’ in various states with references to complex multi-party system at the national level.

Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot, explain the origin and growth of Hindu nationalist, Bharatiya Janata Party, which emerged as the largest party in national elections of 1996. The changing nature of Indian politics, in general and party system in particular, pointed out that the BJP probably reached its saturation point in the northern and western states in the late 1990’s and to expand further, in geographical terms, party needs more alliances. The party’s success in Uttar Pradesh, exhorted it to repeat the Lucknow tactic in Delhi. It tried to engineer defections, first in Gujarat and then at the Centre. The bid to form Vajpayee led NDA government, by accepting anyone’s support, was a part of a concerted effort to break the barrier of unacceptability. The shift suggested the BJP’s readiness to compromise the principles, which it pretended to be the very embodiment of and to look for short-cuts to power. The book contains various papers, which analyze from different angles, how it dealt with constraints and compulsions, in different states. In addition, the BJP’s stand on the liberalization policy, the obvious contradictions between the ‘rhetoric’ ‘swadeshi’, and rather pragmatic governance of the economy, also discussed by the scholars.

Partha S. Ghosh, studies Bharatiya Janata Party, which not only brought to the fore, a new idiom of Indian politics, based on the concept of ‘Hindutva’ (Hinduness), but also challenged, the very idea of secularism. The phenomenal rise of the BJP, and corresponding growth of Hindu political resurgence, was variously branded as Hindu fundamentalism, Hindu revivalism and Hindu nationalism. Since religion and communalism was used by the BJP to mobilize its support, it would be useful, if they are introduced conceptually and historically, as well as from, perspectives of recent international experience. Ghosh seeks to assess party’s future and also to vertically analyze its ideological foundation and intellectual depth. At the core of inquiry, are such basic questions as, what role religion contributes to politics in India? And the concept of the ‘Hindu Rashtra’ (Hindu nation) actually connote. The policy issues, as those related to the economy and foreign relations, were also addressed, so as to view, the party and its ideology from a holistic perspective.

Gehlot,\textsuperscript{69} evaluates various challenges to Indian politics. In actual practice; India’s democracy can be superficial as it is ‘big.’ The multi-party elections regularly held, but these elections were ‘rigged’ by a powerful mafia, at the behest of the parties. The elections particularly at the state and lower levels are still notoriously corrupt and violence prone, as the events of 13\textsuperscript{th} parliamentary elections, present the scenario. Gehlot concludes that in multi-party system, the mandate was in favour of the NDA, headed by A.B. Vajpayee, whose leadership was widely accepted and appreciated, because of the clean image and Kargil conflict. The author is of the view that the coalition model under the leadership of Vajpayee, was able to accommodate, forces of multi-diversities, i.e. of pluralism in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. The scholar presents an in-depth analysis of the problems and challenges to Indian polity, confronted in this decade. It includes the study in the areas, such as dilution of federal forces, the rise of the BJP led NDA, the rise of regional forces, tribal and other affiliations, as well as identities based on religious and caste factors.

Desouza and Sridharan,\textsuperscript{70} explore wide range of problems and issues, in specific areas of Indian politics, in general and focusing on party system, in particular. The scholars are of the view that parties in India’ are multi-faceted organizations, functioning in interaction with each other, as these parties compete for power, both at the Centre and in the states, in a federal system that consists of distinct state and national party system. These parties can be organizationally thin or thick, deeply rooted and penetrative in civil society or super structures, highly ideological or purely electoralist, strongly linked to particular sections of the society or ‘catch-all’ in character. The authors bring together seminal articles, new studies on national, regional parties and specific commentaries, on the important aspects of parties and party systems. This volume includes, various ideas, such as party-less democracy by M.N. Roy and Jaya Prakash Narayan. The character of parties in terms of their ideology, social base and organizational form, discussed by Yogendra Yadav, Suhas Palshikar, B.D. Graham and K.C. Suri etc. The book also covers the significance of defections for representative democracy.

Dikshit,\textsuperscript{71} investigates about theory and practice of electoral geography, on the one hand and about the fundamentals of the post-1947 developments in party structure and nature of electoral politics in the country, on the other. The author examines the relevance of the social cleavage theory to the Indian political system and of the evolving nature of party system. The few dramatic changes occurred within and among parties that substantially, altered conditions within parties, relations among them and partly provided the main link between state and society and, state-society relations.

Ramashray Roy and Paul Wallace,\textsuperscript{72} describe the working of democracy, through the telescope of 2004 general elections in India and related phenomena, at the national and state levels. Roy and Wallace analyze surprise victory of United Progressive Alliance (UPA) over National Democratic Alliance, in general and growing distance between, what the people need and what the parties, are able to provide, despite their high sounding rhetoric, in particular. The authors highlight that one party dominant system was replaced by two national coalitions, led by the Congress and the BJP respectively. The electoral politics ensured that compromise was essential for both the national as well as regional parties to maintain coalitions. The extreme rhetoric’s based on religion, caste and even secularism, was moderated by compulsions of electoral politics, as filtered through India’s diversity. The Congress and the BJP led combines, were not incompatible ideological formations, but competitors in India’s federalist democratic system. The two outstanding facts of April/May 2004 parliamentary elections were that the Congress accepted the coalition game in full measures and secondly, regional parties continued to develop political muscles.

Ahuja’s,\textsuperscript{73} studies focus on parliamentary elections from 1952-1998, and the circumstances leading to the coalition era. He elaborates growth, effects of regional parties and ‘regionalization of national parties,’ during the 10\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha elections and the substantial failure of the central leadership of the Congress, the

BJP and the Janata Dal. Some regional parties had their anti-Congress bias, such as Shiv Sena and Akali Dal etc. The scholar argues that existence of multi-party system was the root cause of hung-Parliament. The writer concludes that the BJP adopted a moderate approach towards regional forces, which strengthened ties between the BJP and the regional players, and its success paved the way for the growth of regionalization process.

Zoya Hasan,⁷⁴ presents a comprehensive picture of the origin, evolution and transformation of political parties in India since independence. The parties are in a state of disarray. The intra and inter-party conflicts eroded the legitimacy and reputation of both the parties and their leaders. The leadership of the parties willfully pursued their own narrow interests, at the expense of the greater common good. The author examines their role in political mobilization, governance, formulation and implementation of economic and social policies, ethnic conflicts, separatist movements and working of democracy. The multi-party system emerged with ‘two alliance structures’, at each end and several regional-based parties, that were free floating. According to Hasan, a mix of bi-polarity and multi-polarities system emerged, which distinguished it from the state levels. The volume also contains, useful articles by scholars, covering changes, both within political parties and party system. The first section focuses on the dominance and decline of the Congress Party; the second section deals with the rise and growth of Hindu nationalist politics, and the role of its ideology. The third section, evaluates radical politics and Left parties. The fourth section deals with social diversity and party politics, based on regional and state based parties. The fifth and final section, discusses political competition and transformation of the party system as well as coalition politics. The significant contributions are by Rajni Kothari, B.D. Graham, Christophe Jaffrelot, James Manor and Balveer Arora etc.

Sandeep Shastri, K.C. Suri and Yogendra Yadav,⁷⁵ provide a detail analysis of dynamics of electoral politics in India, post-2004, in general and outcome of the 14th Lok Sabha elections, in particular. The scholars emphasize that general elections in country, cannot be understood, without placing them in the context of

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specification of state politics. Yogendra Yadav, is of the view, that the mandate of 2004, was not against economic reforms. Yadav adds that the NDA regime was perceived to be pro-rich and that over-riding anxiety among voters, was related to conditions of employment, which seemed to be declining. In 2009 Lok Sabha polls, the Congress Party benefited, because, voters were more concerned with stability at the Centre than politics in the states. The analysts argue that, campaign effects are certainly seen as major factors, which could explain the debacle of the NDA in 2009. Varun Gandhi’s ‘hate’ campaigns against minorities, alienated neutral voters from the BJP, besides helping to consolidate Muslim votes against it. The essays in this volume provide an in-depth analysis of the politics in the nineteen states. The scholars used data from national election study 2004, for building an evidence based understanding, of Indian voters and their answers, to critical questions, on citizen perceptions of their governments, leadership, nature and context of political choices.

Mehra, Khanna and Kueck, discuss party politics and party system in India and put them in a comparative perspective, with Germany and European Union. The authors emphasize that after the 13th general elections in 1999, the country embarked on a distinctly different phase of her democratic journey, with a distinct change in party politics. It brought changes in their leadership, ideological profile, support base, programmatic content, their spread and reach across the country and above all, their numbers as well as in the texture of party system. The emergence of the BJP, as the largest party, was created on the basis for bi-nodal party politics in the country, in the near future, since the Third Front remained in total disarray. In a way, it also paved the way for coalition politics. Balveer Arora, in his paper, “Federalization of India’s Party System,” points out that party system, became highly competitive, in which parties, depending on their social bases, internal organizations and ideologies, developed complex modes of interactions or co-existence. Arora discovers processes, both of federalization and renewal, as well as, also observes, that the days of Congress-style of centralized federalism, in party structure, was over; the reality is that the party was finding hard to, adjust. Both the Congress and the BJP were naturally aspiring for parliamentary majority, if not Congress type dominance, the BJP was able to grasp the reality of coalition and federalization, better than the

Congress Party. The scholar looked at the processes of renewal of party system from various sources, particularly intra-party democracy and, statutory processes, including 73rd and 74th amendments in 1993 etc.

Rashmi Sharma,\(^\text{77}\) discusses 14th Lok Sabha elections in 2004. In her study, Sharma examines different strategies and agendas, both of the Congress Party and the NDA, for winning general elections. The verdict of 2004 surprised everybody. The NDA was very much hopeful in forming the government comfortably, under the leadership of Vajpayee, but lost. The Congress and Left parties were not sure, that it will be able to improve its tally. Mayawati, President, BSP, Mulayam Singh Yadav and Amar Singh, President and General Secretary of Samajwadi Party, respectively, were very much sure of becoming the kingmakers, but verdict bewildered everyone. The outcome of 14th Lok Sabha elections was a triumph, not just for democracy, but also civilization’s ethos of inclusiveness and plurality. The scholar revealed the fact that Indian electorates ‘executed’ a ‘perfect-some’ result. Indeed, it was the BJP’s relentless, ‘feel good hype’ and its anti-Sonia ‘videshi’ (foreigner) invective, that ultimately pushed the other ‘unshining’ India, towards the Congress Party. In fact, Sonia Gandhi emerged as the shining leader, offering herself and her children, as champions of ‘marginalized oppressed.’

Yogesh Atal,\(^\text{78}\) throws light on major political events of parliamentary elections in 1999 and emerging scenario among the political parties. The 1999’s poll results, clearly showed people’s declining faith in the Congress Party and preference for the continuance of coalition. In his study, Atal highlights the circumstances’ as to why Vajpayee government lost majority in the Lower House and final dissolution of 12th Lok Sabha. The author examines the manifestos of major parties to identify commonalities and differences. Almost, all political parties, changed alliances for their short term gains and blurred their ideological boundaries.

Meenu Roy,\(^\text{79}\) makes an elaborate study of 1996’s general elections and emerging trends in political parties. The Lok Sabha elections in 1996 was the

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turning point, even though no issue was raised, before the people, and the verdict was not clear. It produced a hung Parliament, which opened the flood gates of horse-trading. The circumstances under which, H.D. Deve Gowda, formed the United Front government at the Centre are discussed, and also revealing; contentious issues, between government and its outside supporter as the Congress Party. The INC was on the decline in the wake of weak leadership. The parties were so eager to grab power, even though, compromising with their respective ideologies, i.e. trend shifting from a dominated multi-party system, to a competitive multi-party system.

Ghosh, 80 opines that, whosoever, controls the Hindi heartland, also known as cow belt, controls the government at the Centre. It constitutes nine Hindi speaking states, namely Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan. The Hindu majority or Hindu factor, influences the thrust of national politics. The essay is based on comprehensive empirical data, historical facts and electoral performance. Ghosh assesses the relative strengths and weaknesses of both the Congress and the BJP, to dominate the politically important region, during the last five decades. The scholar finds out that decline of the Congress was attributable to the fact, that this balance was destroyed. The BJP created a niche for itself in the heartland, largely at the cost of the Congress and compensate, through the NDA partners. However, the larger question is whether the heartland would remain the epic center of power or not. The way technology is moving in other parts of India, most notably, the south and the west, are taking advantage of it.

Himanshu, 81 investigates the electoral campaigns of major political parties in 15th Lok Sabha elections 2009. The political parties used various kinds of data such as literacy rate as well as infant mortality rate, percentage of immunized children, below poverty line population, per capita expenditure and annual household income etc to attack the ruling party both at state as well as central levels, on the one hand and compared and contrast the performance of the parties, on the other hand. The political parties included statistical evidence in their manifestos and number of

media outlets cited during election campaign to educate the voters. The author finds out that most of the data were fictitious and lacked credibility. It was because the data was not based on any official or reliable sources.

Kulkarni,\textsuperscript{82} compares and contrasts populist measures offered by national political parties, particularly the Congress Party and the BJP in their manifestos of 2009 general elections. Both parties made specific promises to almost every section of society as ‘\textit{kisan}’ (farmer), ‘\textit{jawans}’ (army) and students etc. It clearly indicates that the latter gave a far broader populist thrust to its governance agenda. However, the voter are becoming astute enough to judge parties and their leaders on the basis of their performance and not promises alone.

Steven I. Wilkinson,\textsuperscript{83} examines the electoral performance of various political parties and raised the questions as to why did the BJP lose general elections in 2004 that everyone thought it would win? Wilkinson debunks three explanations, first, the deleterious effects of economic reforms on the poor. Secondly, a backlash against the BJP’s anti-secular practice and last, the growth of anti-incumbent sentiments were the few reasons. The relative electoral success of the Congress Party and debacle of the BJP were determined by how well they worked out their alliances and seat-adjustments with the many state level parties.

Atul Kohli,\textsuperscript{84} argues that victory of the Congress Party in 2009 parliamentary elections was not historic like previous polls of 1971, 1984, 1989 and 1991. The success of the Congress Party was just vote for continuity and product of alliance politics. Kohli believes that the ‘first-past-post-electoral system’, might enhance the popular support base of the Congress Party. It grew mainly in the poor Hindi heartland belt particularly in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. The electorates growing disillusionment with the corrupt and ineffective backward caste parties in these states. The Lok Sabha elections in 2009 by contrast with earlier national elections, was free from crises and not manufactured any electoral waves. It was just a regular, timely and well-conducted elections that underline the growing maturity of Indian democracy.

\textsuperscript{82} Sudheendra Kulkarni, “Why India Turning to Populism”, \textit{The Indian Express}, 5 April 2009.
\textsuperscript{83} Steven I. Wilkinson, “Reading the Election Results”, in Ganguly, Diamond and Plattner, n.62.
\textsuperscript{84} Atul Kohli, “What are you calling a Historic Mandate”, \textit{The Indian Express}, 19 May 2009.
Paranjoy,\(^{85}\) talks about whether or not anti-incumbency sentiment pronounced. It is important to understand that why anti-incumbency factors were not working in specific regions at particular point in time. In this context, the scholar quoted the case of the Left Front government in West Bengal and Tripura, Narendra Modi government in Gujarat, and Sheila Dikshit government in Delhi won elections continuously in their respective states etc. The scholar suggests that anti-incumbency factor can be countered by good governance, which on occasions can transcend political ideology. A divided opposition and ineffective leadership are also important considerations that influence voting patterns.

Gopal Krishna Gandhi,\(^{86}\) review the electoral process of the country. According to Gandhi, it generally means the pitting of A’s money against those of B. The elections come to mean the infusing of candidature with cash. The fizz of money-white, black and grey- pervades the election air. There is real danger that the poor rural voters may think that rain of cash and of gifts at the elections time is the part of the process, like poster and loudspeakers and they may not realize how it undermines democracy. The scholar suggests that political parties must set-up their own ‘Lok Pals’ and ‘Lok Ayuktas’ to check these malaises.

Chandrasekhar,\(^{87}\) argues that the differences between the Congress and the BJP on the economic issues were getting blurred. The neo-liberalism remained the dominant ideology whether it was the UPA or the NDA in power. The Congress Party came into power in 2004 by opposing BJP’s ‘India shining’ rhetoric. The UPA’s in the first term pursued a mix kind of neo-liberal programme, because it relied on the outside support of the Left parties. But in the second tenure, focus was on high driven growth. According to the scholar, both Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress Party made almost same kind of promises in 2009 parliamentary elections. According to the author, the BJP’s in its manifesto of 2009 Lok Sabha elections spoke of four kind of connectivity; (I) physical- good road and power supply (II) digital-modern telecom and IT services (III) knowledge- good schools and vocational training centers (IV) market connectivity. In a similar fashion, Rahul

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Gandhi talked about the party and to put the building blocks in the place. Rahul Gandhi further explained:

*India is more connected today than it has ever been, we have the network of roads, information, communications, people and media for new ideas to emerge, for them to develop and take flight.*

Dasarathi Bhuyan,\(^88\) mentions that regional parties represented not only newly emergent regional elites, but also the complex regional values and regional ambitions. Their emergence also indicates a shift in the center of power from cosmopolitan center to remote provincial and rural areas. The author studies the role and growth of regional parties as Ganatra Parishad, Jana Congress, Utkal Congress, Jagrat Orissa Party and Biju Janata Dal, in Orissa.

Tripathi,\(^89\) analyses the role of smaller parties particularly Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Samajwadi Party (SP), which emerged as a ‘wheeler-dealer’, extracting favour from the Congress in return for support to the UPA-II government, after the exit of Trinamool Congress and the DMK in September 2012 and March 2013 respectively. The credibility of the both national parties the Congress Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party was all time low, because both the parties were brownie points (get approval for actions) each other on various issues particularly corruption, that affected the common man. The scholar believes that these circumstances may create a hope that regional players despite being seen as ineffective right now, may again play an important role in the future.

Sitaram Yechury,\(^90\) is of the view that Congress Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party pursued same kind of policies in redressing the issues of livelihood of people. There was need for alternative policy trajectories that contain and weaken communal forces; follow economic policies where people came before profits. Therefore, it was perfect possible, this time around for a non-Congress, anti-communal forces combine would garner enough support for an alternative. Yechury

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underlines that political consideration became the compulsion of some parties to remain in present alliances in order to continue with their state governments, i.e. Janata Dal (U) could not afford to leave the NDA, similarly, DMK vis-a-vis the Indian National Congress in Tamil Nadu.

Rasheeda Bhagat,\(^\text{91}\) highlights the plight of countless farmers like Natha, hero in film ‘\textit{Peepli Live},’ who triggered a dark and grim thought chains, i.e., was the double digit growth in gross domestic production (GDP), swank airports, the glittering malls, and world leader chasing the India growth story and ritzy villa in big cities, really benefited the weaker sections of society or all just mirages? The powerful politicians, bureaucrats and corporate dons continuing to flout the rule book or the law of the land with impunity, siphoning away hundred and crore of rupees from the exchequer, while the ordinary mortals get locked up for years, for taking a bribe of a few hundred rupees. The scholar feels that Indian polity is going down to the path of becoming a banana republic.

Prabhu Chawla,\(^\text{92}\) discusses various factors responsible for the victory of the Congress Party and causes of defeat of the NDA particularly the BJP in 15\(^\text{th}\) Lok Sabha elections 2009. The INC won elections by practicing the ‘politics of inclusion’, and regained its original identity as an umbrella party under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi. It was once again sheltering ‘banyan tree’, under which everyone could find place-the Brahmans, the Muslims and the dalits etc, i.e., Congress Party regained the traditional vote bank back. The BJP steeped in identity politics and ideological fusion, lost the middle class. It miserably missed the presence of a reconciler leader like Vajpayee.

Naqvi and Dasgupta,\(^\text{93}\) believe that there is dynastic rule in India from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. There were twenty five newcomers elected to 15\(^\text{th}\) Lok Sabha, who belonged to families that actively participate in politics since long and monopolized power. Consequently, few families are still dominating the political landscape of the country. At the top of the pile, the ‘mini’ and ‘major dynastic’ are the Gandhi’s, with crown prince Rahul Gandhi. According to the authors, the idea of

\(^{91}\) Rasheeda Bhagat, “Great Nation or Banana Republic”, \textit{Business Line}, 18 January 2011.


inherited charisma does work in the feudal society. If the parents are charismatic figures, then the public will respond to his or her child’s appeal for votes. The scholars further add that even those, who started their career as caste leaders or regional satraps, later turn to dynasty to guard their interests. However, the scholars did not mention the names of prominent dynastic families.

Sutanu Guru,\textsuperscript{94} traces that around about 150 members of Parliament (MPs) belong to dynasty-big or small in 15\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha. It is wrong to conclude that dynastic politics is a Congress phenomenon. In fact, it is a south Asian phenomenon and even the United States is now dabbling in a bit of dynasty politics. The scholar argues that Indian society is hierarchical in which son to do what father did. Consequently, the entry barriers for newcomer to politics are quite high. Practically, the dynasty is no longer an issue in Indian polity. Guru presents a comprehensive state wise list of political families from Kashmir to Kanayakumari, which ruled India for generations, much like the erstwhile ‘maharajas’ (kings) and ‘maharanis’ (queens).

Prasannan,\textsuperscript{95} evaluates the results of 2009 national elections with reference to the performance of the UPA-I government. Manmohan Singh made ‘good governance’ an election issue and his party (Congress) made voters believe him by constantly talking of rural jobs, farm loan waivers, forest rights, economic growth and nuclear energy to villages in 15\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha elections 2009. Thus, a colourless and uncharismatic Manmohan Singh’s five years lackluster rule changed Indian electoral politics beyond recognition. The opposition parties particularly BJP raised the issues of dark treasures hoarded in Swiss Banks, but could not point a finger at anyone in the ruling fraternity.

Ramakrishnan,\textsuperscript{96} summarizes that the Congress Party was making strong come back across the country with 206 seats in 2009 national elections. The mandate for the UPA, undoubtedly provided a stable government that was free from pulls and pressures from alliance partners. None of the regional and smaller parties

\textsuperscript{95} R. Prasannan, “Singh is King”, \textit{The Week}, Vol. 27, No. 27, 31 May 2009.
\textsuperscript{96} Ventikesh Ramakrishnan, “Congress Resurgence”, \textit{Frontline}, Vol. 26, No. 11, 5 June 2009.
hoped to play decisive role in the formation of the central government and policy making. However, the arguments of the scholar proved wrong on many instances.

Sudha Pai,\(^{97}\) analyses the basic transformation of party system from one party dominant system to multi-party system, and a parallel process of ‘regionalization of politics.’ The party system entered into a phase of transition, since the second half of the 1980’s and a ‘new regionalized multi-party’ system gradually emerging, in which, all parties based in various states, compete for power at the Centre. The regionalization is a reflection of the plural and federal character of the polity, cause an affect of growing politicization of the various ethno-cultural entities. Pai finds that party system was getting more competitive, and developing into a distinct regional party system, i.e. quite different from the national party system. The new leadership emerged, conservative in outlook, authoritarian in their method of functioning and little respect for constitutional proprieties. Most of them used caste and communal based mobilization to come into power.

Era Sezhiyan,\(^{98}\) points out the contradictions between the federal Constitution and the centralized unitary structure of political parties in India. The national political parties, especially the Congress Party, were responsible for the emergence of such unwarranted concentration of power and highly centralized leadership. There is a ‘draconian’ concentration of power in the hand of party president, without whose permission, no party-men can be given party-support and symbol in an election. The selection of candidates is often described as ‘distribution of tickets’. The leadership had a stronghold to regulate the conduct of his party members in the legislature, through issuing of whips and directives, in voting on motions in the House. If any member does not obey the ‘whipocracy’ of party, they are considered as a defector and are liable to be disqualified, for being a member of the House. Sezhiyan also compared Indian party system with the USA, the UK and Germany and suggested that in India, legislators may be allowed to debate and vote freely like the USA and the UK, except in the case of a no-confidence motion.


Naidu, \(^{99}\) assesses relative strength and weakness of parties, on the basis of their electoral performance in 13\(^{th}\) Lok Sabha elections. The BJP’s electoral performance in 1999 parliamentary elections, either as a repeated performance or renewal of 1998 mandate, was too simplistic or could be disputed. The statistics data do not tell the full story. Within each state, new constituencies were won and old were lost, by party, even though there was no change in the total number of seats, won by the BJP in 1999 general elections. It is difficult to believe that party received public approval for continuance of its rule, unless one is led to agree, that voters in India decided to ‘ditch the party’ in some constituencies, but reward it in other equal number of constituencies. Naidu emphasized that it was the inability of national parties, to expand and form governments, on their own and increase dependence, on the support of numerous smaller political institutions, with inherent instability, accompanying all such coalitional arrangements. As consequences, it is the changing nature of the party system.

Mehta, \(^{100}\) observes that internal organizational weaknesses of Indian parties, makes democracy less effective. According to Mehta, the poorly institutionalized intra-party democracy produces more factions, where the legitimacy of contending groups, is not dependent upon open mandate with the party, but the survival of politicians, depends more on intrigue, than on persuading their followers. Indeed, the Indian parties seem to be similar, in their style of functioning. Most are based on loyalty to leader, rather than loyalty to cause or institution. There is still existence of ideological differences among parties, but they adopted a same mix of policies, when in power. The scholar summarized, that without democratic parties, we cannot have genuinely democratic polity.

Sudhir Kumar Singh, \(^{101}\) argues that by the 1980’s, there was creation of political vacuum in some states, leading to the rise of regional parties, which claim to have an altogether different programmes, from the Congress Party and did not seek to provide a national alternative to the ruling party, rather rooted in regional

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\(^{100}\) Pratap Bhanu Mehta, “Tackle Disarray; Factionalism”, *The Tribune* (Special Supplement) 24 September 2005.

grievances and aspirations. The writer holds that genesis and development of regional players, can and should be seen as a response, to the failure of Indian socio-politico-economic system, to generate accommodative space for regional aspirations and expectations. As a result, the emergence of coalition culture and multiple power centers eroded political stability at the Centre and various states. This trend also weakened the ‘texture of prime ministerial system’, i.e. undermining the authority of executive head of the state.

In her article, Vandana Mishra,\textsuperscript{102} assesses relative strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to both the BJP and the Congress Party, in 14\textsuperscript{th} general elections, which were two major contending parties in national elections. The BJP appeared to be in an upbeat mood as a result of three Vidhan Sabha elections namely Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in December 2003, buoyant economy and positive developments in Indo-Pak relations among others. The Congress Party being the main opposition party, had to bank on certain factors, like anti-incumbency, youth and unemployment, plight of farmers, internal insecurity, so on and so forth. Mishra highlights the facts that the BJP, packed, with full of white collared, and elite leadership, but lacks on the front of rural leadership, in comparison with the Congress Party. The dependence on dynastic rule, was such that Congress failed to build up a second line of leadership. The projections of Rahul and Priyanaka as future politicians, further demonstrated this bankruptcy in party.

Balveer Arora,\textsuperscript{103} is of the view that political parties acquired legitimacy, in all democracies, and their existence in sufficient number, even become a test for democratic credentials, of polity. Organizationally, their tendency is to drift into oligarchic style of control and functioning. Arora states that parties developed their own rituals, with annual conventions, being less deliberative and more ‘\textit{darshan oriented}’. While, they perform useful functions of generating bonds of solidarity, they are no substitutes for democratic functioning. The cadre based organizations, like Communist parties, have a better structured consultative process, in which the principle of democratic centralization, ensures that decisions thus arrived are


\textsuperscript{103} Balveer Arora, “Can Democracy Flourish with Undemocratic Parties?”, \textit{The Tribune} (Special Supplement), 15 August 2007.
transparent. The scholar points out that rise and growth of political families, are another significant development, as party after party, falls back on the wives, sons, and daughters, of its leader to renew it. The parties need constant rejuvenation and youth wings become traditional catchment areas. The nepotism tends to undermine the attractiveness of political careers for fresh entrants, as access to the top, seems restricted to ‘charmed circles’.

Mahesh Rangarajan,\(^\text{104}\) discusses the revival of Congress Party. The scholar raises questions, whether or not, the party gained ground, since it led the UPA into power, some years ago, preoccupies anyone concerned with the future of Indian politics. This in turn, was intricately, linked to the issue of when and how, Rahul Gandhi heir-apparent, moved to center-stage. At the moment, both these issues, the revival of the party and the ‘anointing’ of Rahul Gandhi, were in turn, bound up with a larger issue of immediate relevance, to the country as a whole, namely the performance of Manmohan Singh government. The coming to power of the UPA, marked a major shift for the Congress Party, and its allies, as well as supporting partners. Even more than Sonia Gandhi’s decision to stay away from public office, the direct participation of regional forces and the external support of Left, gave a distinct character, from that of all Congress led ministries, in the past. Rangarajan states that Congress has miles to go; if it wants to add, to its strength and convert its present position as the largest partner in the coalition to a dominant presence. Its major threat is less from an opposition, in disarray, still less from recalcitrant allies.

K.K. Kailash,\(^\text{105}\) focuses on the nature of alliances, which emerged in 2009 national elections. The scholar analyses the performance of different alliances and tries to show, how alliances and non-alliances, had an impact on the final outcome of national elections in 2009 and party system. There was no national level alliance but state-specific ones, based on seat sharing adjustments. The alliance makers, both the BJP and the Congress and even Left, pre-alliances, were only to bridge the ‘territorial gaps’. A major change brought by Congress, opting to abandon its national alliance, in favour of state level agreements. The new delimitation provided Congress Party an opportunity to redraw the lines and emerged out of the corner,


that it had ‘boxed into’, by its coalition’s partners. Kailash holds that unlike 2004, all parties looking for post-election negotiations and both the major groupings announced no common programme. The author further added that the prominent role played by many regional parties, this indicates that coalition politics is here to stay and Lok Sabha elections of 2009, set fresh bargaining makers and future alliance making.

Inder Malhotra,\(^{106}\) examines the functioning and the role of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Congress Party, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Samajwadi Party (SP), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), and Trinamool Congress etc. It is unrealistic to expect a wide, open and candid discussion in a party in which everything is decided by the high command or by the core committee. According to the scholar, the BJP emerged as a party with differences and its anger against grafts as well as loot only confined to rhetoric against the scam-smothered, Congress led UPA government. But the BJP was blind to corruptions in its own domain. Malhotra suggests that it is necessary to outline some broader parameters within which the mainstream parties have to function.

Sridharan,\(^{107}\) traces the coalition strategies of national and regional parties in India’s federal parliamentary single-member district, simple-plurality system during the evolution of the national party system from a one-party dominant system to fragmented multi-party system. The scholar highlights that there was not only continuation of “multiple-bipolarity” in the states but also the emergence of complex and fluid pre and post-poll coalitions in both the national and state arenas. The author characterized regional party system into four ways: (I) a bi-party system, (II) two coalitions, (III) one party versus coalitions of two or more parties and (IV) a still evolving system of three or more significant parties contesting independently. The focus of the paper is on the compatibilities between the strategies, expansion and consolidation of power of the Bharatiya Janata Party and range of regional parties with a base only in one or few states.


Pradeep Chibber,\textsuperscript{108} underlines that 2009 national elections as an aggregation of state-level results. It is true that Indian politics was based on state specific parties, except few states such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and Delhi. The national parties formed state specific electoral strategy. The data of National Election Study showed that national level factors did influence the voters’ choice. Even, state level factors continue to have an impact on electoral politics.

Baldev Raj Nayar,\textsuperscript{109} comprehensively studies the outstanding events of national elections 2004. He underlines that the Congress Party’s strategy of building coalitions with regional parties was critical to its victory and the party successfully identify itself with the poor, pronouncing the BJP to be the party of the rich. The scholar finds out that the results of the general elections was no more than a mere summation of regional results, rather than the manifestation of a nationwide trend. The peaceful transfer of power from one coalition to another, no doubt, represented the consolidation of democracy.

Harish Khare,\textsuperscript{110} explains that the nature of mandate in 2009 Lok Sabha elections, which was qualitatively different from the national elections of 2004. The voters defined conventional wisdom and rebuffed the small-time practitioner of unethical politics. The 2009 parliamentary elections verdict also interpreted as a rejection of the politics of negativism and exclusion. The voters placed an obligation on all parties and political formations to devise a new grammar of politics, of hope and inclusion. They expect warring parties to discover the virtue of bipartisanship on the issues. Khare suggests that the two equations between the Prime Minister and Congress’ Party President and between Prime Minister and coalition partners be reset in accordance with the new mandate.

Kuldip Nayar,\textsuperscript{111} finds out that the Congress Party and the BJP were involved in many scams and corruption cases. That is why; both parties have no


\textsuperscript{110} Harish Khare, “Obligations of the New Mandate”, \textit{The Hindu}, 18 May 2009.

\textsuperscript{111} Kuldip Nayar, “Functioning of Congress, BJP”, \textit{The Tribune}, 12 May 2012.
differences on this issue. The author compares Bofors Gun scandal with Bangaru Laxman’s case. Nayar pointed out that the real story was bureaucracy, which became so malleable that party in power could mould it in way it liked. Consequently, one adverse fallout was that the bureaucracy did not, now follow any rule as there is no accountability. Nayar believes that the Congress led UPA-II government obviously did not take any action against the official, nor would the BJP do so.

Amulya Ganguli,\textsuperscript{112} investigates causes of the decline of Third Front, in general and the CPI (M) in particular, in 2009 national elections. Prakash Karat’s singular achievement had to take the Left parties down from the highest point it ever achieved to one of the lowest in recent years. It was not only the dubious choice of partners as Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Telugu Desam Party (TDP), All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and Biju Janata Dal (BJD), that exposed the limitation of Karat’s stewardship but also had very little control over his warring comrades in the party at his home state-Kerala. Mayawati, Jayalalitha, Chandrababu Naidu and Naveen Patnaik, were reluctant allies of the NDA, who showed least interest in the Third Front.

Jyotirmaya Sharma,\textsuperscript{113} highlights the stressful relations between Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Due to strange relationship, the BJP lost 15\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha elections in 2009. A.B. Vajpayee and L.K. Advani ignored advices of the RSS leadership on various issues including trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir and disinvestment in the country, in the name of running coalition government (NDA). Sharma believed that the RSS and the BJP till 2004 followed twin strategy: they spoke nationalism when in power and Hindutva when out of power. The BJP election manifesto for 2009 contained potpourri of disparate elements, ranging from building ‘Ram Temple’, to tax relief for middle class and emphasis on development. The scholar suggests that there is nothing like ‘Hindu vote bank’. The BJP understand this fact, if party wanted to move head.

\textsuperscript{112} Amulya Ganguli, “Driven by Dogma”, \textit{The Times of India}, 19 May 2009.
\textsuperscript{113} Jyotiramaya Sharma, “Barking up the Wrong Tree”, \textit{Hindustan Times}, 20 May 2009.
Harsh Goenka,\textsuperscript{114} opines that 2009 was the new 1991, that is, the result of 2009 Lok Sabha elections was startlingly similar to the 1991 parliamentary elections. Once again, the Congress Party fell of majority, but with no threat to stability. The people casted their votes for stability and consistency, viewed for political stability or economic progress. The writer compares and contrasts Indian Premier League (IPL) with Indian leadership. The IPL or Indian political leadership must play to win.

Vir Sanghvi,\textsuperscript{115} express that elections indicate the ‘mood of the nation.’ The elections are swung only by caste consideration, by anti-incumbency and by issues raised during the electoral campaigns. The author assessed that this was not true in case of Rahul Gandhi. If party invests time, efforts in a state over the years and fields’ clean, enthusiastic young candidates as well as promise a better long term future, then the voter are willing to listen.

Bhambhr\textsuperscript{116} elaborates the emerging scenario of assembly elections in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Manipur, and Goa in 2012. These polls attracted national attention because all parties including regional parties engaged in a tough electoral battle for survival, which would also determine next course of actions in 16\textsuperscript{th} Lok Sabha elections. In other words, assembly elections gained national importance because, the national parties needed regionalists to support their governments, and the regionalist tends to promote sectarian interest at the cost of national goal.

Shankar,\textsuperscript{117} defines stressful relation between Congress Party and Trinamool Congress during the tenure of the UPA-II. The alliance between the two was rocked by acrimony. The author observes that Mamata Banerjee, Chief, Trinamool Congress, was planning for a pan-national image after her unprecedented success in West Bengal assembly polls. That is why; Mamata Banerjee opposed the FDI in retail sector, that decision brought tremendous support from among the small traders across the country.

\textsuperscript{114} Harsh Goenka, “Time for That Lofted Six”, \textit{The Times of India}, 22 May 2009.
\textsuperscript{116} C.P. Bhambhr, “Regional Aspirations Prevail in Assembly Polls”, \textit{The Pioneer}, 6 January 2012.
\textsuperscript{117} Kalyani Shankar, “Allies in New Delhi, Rivals in Kolkata”, Ibid.
Prasad, is of the opinion that regional parties and their leaders searched for a larger role and wanted to acquire greater say at the Centre after assembly elections 2012, be it in Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, West Bengal or Andhra Pradesh. The regional bosses might decide the contours of the political leadership in future. Both the national parties, the Congress Party and the BJP realized the strong leaders in a state can make albeit (strength) with different agendas. The author quoted the cases of Virbhadra Singh in Himachal Pradesh, Narendra Modi in Gujarat etc. Prasad raised the question, is it a case of inability of strong regional leaders to work within an establish system of national parties, or preferring to lead on their own terms rather being led? These are issues that continue to be a part of discussion among political parties, leaders and their followers.

Maya Chadda, presents an overall picture of Indian polity in the year 2012. There was a steep decline in economy, disarray in politics, paralysis in policy and lack of discipline within the ruling coalition (UPA-II). According to Chadda, the coalition era, now created a pattern of ‘ebb and flow’ i.e., relative centralization of power at first, followed by a steady erosion of power, as the schedule of state assembly elections, alter the arithmetic of the parliamentary majority for ruling coalition, that is, regional parties, supporting a ruling coalition, got re-elected, then the extent of their success frequently redefined the power equation within the coalition. The scholar quoted the case of the success of Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh and Trianamool Congress in West Bengal.

Prasannarajan, after poll survey, which was conducted by ‘India Today-Nielsen Mood of the Nation’, in 2012 demonstrates that the Congress Party was no longer considered the best equipped to solve the problems of the country, nor was the party of the poor and unemployed. It also came into the notice that Congress Party’s inability to lead a stable coalition as well. At that moment, the UPA was trailing behind the NDA. The survey rated the performance of Manmoohan Singh

government, excelled only at ‘talking the talk.’ However, the sample of the survey was very limited, which covered only 125 parliamentary constituencies.

Mahaprashasta,\textsuperscript{121} concludes that 2014 assemblies elections results in four north Indian states namely Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi showed that the much debated Modi factor, cut no ice with the electorates. It was either the performance of individual Chief Minister or the issues that mattered most in these assembly elections. The results of Delhi Vidhan Sabha in January 2014, showed that people were willing to vote for a third party and the Congress and the BJP lost considerable faith. T.K. Rajalakshmi, in “Double Whammy” observes that the anti-Congress mood was more palpable in Rajasthan, because the party was in power both in the state and at the Centre. This was an issue based elections, where personality played a role to the extent that their celebrity presence helped in consolidating votes.

The Chhattisgarh assembly elections was an easy win for the BJP due to the Chief Minister Raman Singh’s populist schemes such as food grains to the people at lower price, free electricity and uninterrupted power supply etc. While, the rival Congress Party was a divided house, with the entire state leadership pitted against former Chief Minister, Ajit Singh, summarized by Purnima S Tripathi, in her essay “Raman Effect.” In the next paper, “A Vote for Shivraj”, Tripathi argues that Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh, affable image, easy accessibility and some solid ground work as ‘bijli sadak and paani’ ensured that he scored a brilliant hat-trick. The vote percentage of both the parties, the Congress Party and the BJP increased by four percentage and eight percentage, respectively. But seats tally of the INC went down from seventy one in 2008 to fifty eight in 2014 in Madhy Pradesh Vidhan Sabha. The BJP seats increased from 143 in 2008 to 165 in 2014. The pollster points out that there was bi-polar contest in these four states and not much fragmentation of voters along with identity line. But, in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the real test for the BJP in general and Narendra Modi in particular in future.

\textsuperscript{121} Ajoy Ashirwad Mahaprashasta, “Wave that was Not; Missing Magic”, \textit{Frontline}, Vol. 30, No.26, 10 January 2014.
Kunal Pradhan,\textsuperscript{122} discovers that Arvind Kejriwal led Aam Aadmi Party’s (AAP) spectacular victory in Delhi assembly election, changed the landscape of Indian politics, in general and party system, in particular. It became now, fashionable to be appearing as ‘\textit{aam aadmi}’ (common man). Almost all the political parties reorient their electoral strategy to counter the AAP effects, in 2014 general elections. The AAP was asking political parties to tick certain boxes (in questionnaires forward to voters) as no corruption charges, clean record, educational qualifications, and local understanding before fielding a candidate. These boxes were rarely ticked before the candidate selection process.

Mahaprashasta,\textsuperscript{123} opines that the success of AAP in Delhi assembly elections historically important for following reasons: the first mass scale expressions of wrath by urban voters against the crony capitalism of the current neo-liberal regime. Secondly, it marked the successful transformation of an anti-graft movement into an electorally relevant party. Finally, the AAP owed its success to temporary volunteers without any political experience. The party victory indicates that a strong alternative political force working against universal issues like corruption and growing inequities not only is viable but may direct Indian politics in future.

Research Questions

The study endeavors to answer following research questions which related with the changing contours of Indian party system during the period from 1996-2009:

1. What are the emerging contours in Indian party system?
2. Is there bi-polarity in party system?
3. How far the performance in 14\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} general elections be read as an indicative of the resurgence of Congress Party?
4. Is the coalition/alliance system stable or not?
5. How far fragmented party system has led to alliance?
6. Is pre-poll alliance arrangement formed by political parties more stable than post-poll alliance?
7. Do the political parties stand for their electoral promises?

8. What is the performance of political parties imply for the nature of party system?

9. Is there the revival of national political parties in India?

Scheme of Chapterization

Chapter-1  Introduction
This chapter introduces the research topic, review of literature, importance of the study and research methodology.

Chapter-2  Political Parties and Party Systems: A Conceptual Analysis
The focus of the chapter outlines the theoretical and conceptual frame-work.

Chapter-3  Indian Party System: A Historical Overview
It covers historical development, genesis and growth of party system, from pre and post independence period.

Chapter-4  Indian Party System in Transitions: 1996 to 2009
The chapter analyses electoral performance, transformation of party structure from one party dominance to bi party and then multi-party system to bi-polar led national alliance system combination with regional parties.

This chapter compare and contrast the nature of alliances of NDA and UPA-I and II the above said period; institutional framework as office of Prime Minister and performance of the both the governments (NDA and UPA).

Chapter-6  Conclusion
The finding of the whole study summarize in the chapter.

Importance of Study
The significance of study emanates, from the choice of period for research in hand. The last decade of twentieth and first decade of twenty first century, has been a turning point in the Indian polity in general and party system in particular.

* This chapter included the formation of UPA-II 2009 and further developments.
Consequently, the Indian party system has passed through various phases from one party dominant system to bi-party situation and then multi-party system to bi-polar alliance system led by BJP and Congress Party. The study is an attempt to answer, is it bi-polar national alliance system, or which represented by two major national parties namely Congress Party or Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The study also finds out emerging trends in Indian party system, which have been left answered or partially answered. For in-depth understanding of parties, their role and response, towards emerging problem is analyzed.

**Methodology**

The study is based on secondary resources. The work makes use of publications and authentic sources released by political parties, Government of India and Election Commission of India. For deep understanding of the problem, books, journals, newspapers, periodicals and internet service are the source of material for the study of the topic.