



Rise of Regional Parties in India



Introduction

- India has a multi-party system of democracy.
- ECI based on poll performance grants recognition to political parties as national or state parties.
- There are eight "recognized national" and more than 50 "recognized state" political parties.

Regional Parties in India

In India regional parties are based on themes like:

- **Identity:** Based on the recognition of the cultural rights of the inhabitants of the states.
- **Statehood:** It demands an independent state within the country.
- **Autonomy:** Asks for greater powers to the states.
- **Development:** Thinks only regional party can bring development in the region.
- Sometimes regional parties create these 'cultural specificities' for electoral gains.

Various Stages of the Indian Party System

- **1952-64:** Indian democracy was a one-party system, termed as 'Congress system'.
- **1964-77:** After the Nehru era and 1967 elections growth of regional parties came about.
- **1977-80:** Emergence of a multi-party system, in the aftermath of emergency, led by Janata Party in 1977.
- **1980-89:** More assertive role of regional parties in centre politics. For eg: TDP as the regional party was the main opposition party in 1984 Lok Sabha.
- **1989-2014:** Era of coalition politics started.
- **2014 – till now:** Return of Single party dominance; 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Implications of Regional Parties

- **Compulsions of coalition**
 - Policy paralysis and delay in decision making.
 - Rainbow' coalitions: 1996-1999 had 3 general elections, which cost a lot of public money.
 - Competition for vote banks based on caste and community.
- **On the positive side**
 - Regional parties have strengthened the cooperative federalism trends of our federal system.
 - Regional parties filled a vacuum by projecting the issues related to minorities and safeguarding their interests.
 - They provided a new dimension to the process of national integration and nation-building.

Way Forward

- Regional parties are a natural consequence of diversity and democracy in India.
- Thus, their growth is in synergy with the entire spirit of democracy.

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