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Section-I

10 Marks Questions - 400-500 words Each

Q. - Briefly explain the dominant features of state politics in India in the first two decades aafter independence.

ANS.- Dominant Features of State Politics in India in the First Two Decades After Independence

The period following India's independence in 1947 up to the late 1960s was crucial in shaping the political landscape of the states. State politics during these first two decades displayed a distinct set of features shaped by historical, social, and institutional factors.

1. Dominance of the Indian National Congress (INC)

The most striking feature of state politics in this period was the overwhelming dominance of the Indian National Congress. The INC, having led the freedom struggle, enjoyed immense credibility and public trust. It formed governments in almost all states and often won elections with massive majorities. Opposition parties were weak, fragmented, or regional, which allowed Congress to set the agenda and control both legislative and administrative mechanisms in the states.

2. Congress Factionalism

Despite its dominance, Congress was not monolithic. State-level politics was often shaped by internal factionalism within the party. Personal rivalries, ideological differences, and competition for leadership positions influenced governance and policy decisions. These factional struggles sometimes led to changes in Chief Ministers or the formation of new political alignments within states, but did not significantly weaken Congress' overall control.

3. Strong Role of Regional Leaders

Many states witnessed the emergence of strong regional leaders who commanded considerable influence, both within the party and among the public. Leaders such as C. Rajagopalachari in Madras, Biju Patnaik in Odisha, and Dr. B.R.

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Ambedkar's influence in Maharashtra highlighted the growing importance of personality-driven politics. These leaders often acted as intermediaries between the central leadership and local constituencies, shaping regional development priorities.

4. Integration and Reorganization of States

The first two decades were marked by the political consolidation of states. Princely states were integrated, and linguistic and administrative reorganization became a key political issue, culminating in the States Reorganisation Act of 1956. This reorganization influenced political alignments, party structures, and identity-based politics in states, as linguistic and cultural aspirations became central to state-level politics.

5. Limited Opposition and Emergence of Regional Parties

While Congress dominated, regional parties and opposition voices began to emerge in response to local issues, linguistic identities, and social inequalities. In states like West Bengal, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, leftist and regional movements laid the foundation for future multiparty competition.

6. Role of Social and Caste Dynamics

Caste and community-based politics started influencing state elections and governance. Political mobilization often occurred along social lines, affecting candidate selection, party support, and policy priorities.

In conclusion, state politics in India's first two decades after independence was dominated by Congress' hegemony, shaped by internal factionalism, strong regional leaders, social mobilization, and the process of state integration and reorganization. This period set the foundation for both centralized party dominance and the eventual rise of regional political forces.

Q. - Discuss the developments that have transformed party system in India since the 1980s.

ANS.- India's party system has undergone major changes since the 1980s, shifting from a period of dominant one-party rule to a competitive multi-party and coalition-based system. Several political, social and economic developments reshaped electoral behaviour, leadership patterns, and party strategies. Together, these developments produced a more fragmented yet dynamic party landscape.

1. Decline of Congress Dominance

Until the early 1980s, the Indian National Congress enjoyed a dominant position in national politics. However, after the 1984 elections, its vote share and organisational strength began declining due to internal factionalism, leadership crises, corruption allegations, and the rise of strong regional alternatives. This decline opened up space for new political formations.

2. Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

The late 1980s saw the rapid emergence of the BJP as a national force. Its mobilisation during the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, strong ideological identity, cadre-based organisation, and appeal across northern and western India enabled it to challenge Congress' dominance. From a marginal party in the early 1980s, BJP became a principal pole of Indian politics by the late 1990s and the central governing party after 2014.

3. Growth of Regional Parties

One of the most significant developments was the rise of powerful regional parties such as the DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, TDP in Andhra Pradesh, Akali Dal in Punjab, Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, SP and BSP in Uttar Pradesh, JD(U) and RJD in Bihar, and TMC in West Bengal. These parties emerged from regional aspirations, caste movements, linguistic identities, and local leadership charisma. Their influence made national governments dependent on regional support.

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4. Coalition Era in the 1990s and 2000s

With no single party gaining a clear majority, India entered a phase of coalition politics. Governments such as the United Front, NDA (1998–2004) and UPA (2004–2014) relied on alliances. Coalition politics marked the transition from a single-party dominant system to a bipolar competition between coalition blocs, transforming policy-making and governance patterns.

5. Mandal Politics and Caste Mobilisation

The implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations in 1990 expanded political participation among OBC communities. Parties like SP, RJD, JD(U) and BSP grew by mobilising caste-based support. This social justice politics transformed voting behaviour and weakened traditional Congress support bases.

6. Identity, Hindutva and New Political Narratives

Since the late 1980s, identity-based narratives—religion, caste, and regional pride—became key drivers. The BJP's Hindutva ideology and the OBC-Dalit empowerment movements reshaped electoral alignments.

7. Centralisation and the Post-2014 Phase

After 2014, the party system saw a new phase of centralised leadership under the BJP, with strong emphasis on nationalism, welfare schemes, digital campaigning, and a reduced role for regional allies. This period witnessed a partial return to dominant-party tendencies.

Conclusion

Since the 1980s, India's party system has shifted from Congress dominance to a competitive, multi-party, coalition-driven, and later BJP-dominated landscape. These changes reflect deeper social transformations and evolving democratic aspirations.

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Q. - Discuss the major determinants of electoral behavior in India.

ANS.- Major Determinants of Electoral Behavior in India

Electoral behavior in India is shaped by a combination of social, economic, political, and psychological factors. Understanding these determinants is crucial to analyzing how voters make decisions in the world's largest democracy.

1. Caste and Community:

Caste continues to play a significant role in Indian elections. Voters often align with political parties or candidates who belong to their caste or represent caste-based interests. Regional parties frequently exploit caste identities to consolidate votes, while national parties try to balance caste equations through alliances and candidate selection. Religious and community affiliations also influence voting patterns, especially in constituencies with distinct religious populations.

2. Religion:

Religion influences electoral choices, particularly in constituencies with large minority populations. Political parties may appeal to religious sentiments or promise community-specific benefits. Communal polarization can sometimes impact voter behavior, though its effect varies across regions and election cycles.

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3. Economic and Social Status:
A voter's economic condition often affects their electoral choices. Issues like poverty, unemployment, inflation, and social welfare programs shape voter preferences. People may vote for parties that promise better economic opportunities, subsidies, or development projects. Social status, including education and occupation, also influences the level of political awareness and participation.

4. Leadership and Candidate Appeal:
Charismatic leaders and local candidates with strong reputations can significantly sway voters. Personality traits, credibility, and past performance of candidates often matter more than party ideologies, particularly in state and local elections.

5. Party Identification and Ideology:
Party loyalty and ideological leanings play an important role, though in India, party identification is less rigid compared to some Western democracies. Voters may shift allegiance based on issues, performance, or coalition politics. Ideological commitments to socialism, secularism, or nationalism may influence urban and educated voters more prominently.

6. Media and Campaigns:
Mass media, social media, and election campaigns influence public perception and voting behavior. Political messaging, advertisements, and debates can shape voter opinions, especially among first-time voters and the youth.

7. Regional and Local Factors:
Local issues such as development projects, law and order, and infrastructure influence voter behavior at the constituency level. Regional parties often capitalize on such local concerns to gain electoral support.

In conclusion, electoral behavior in India is a complex interplay of caste, religion, economic status, leadership appeal, party affiliation, media influence, and regional issues. While some factors like caste and religion have deep-rooted influence, emerging factors like media, youth aspirations, and economic performance are increasingly shaping modern voting patterns.

Q. - Examine the role of the Governor in UnionState relations.

ANS.- The Governor occupies a unique and significant position in India's federal structure. As the constitutional head of the state and a key link between the Union and the states, the Governor performs functions that shape the dynamics of Union–State relations. Although the office is designed to be neutral and non-partisan, its powers often become a matter of debate due to its dual responsibility: acting as the head of the state government and as a representative of the Centre.

Firstly, the Governor plays a crucial **constitutive and executive role** in the state. All executive actions of the state are carried out in the Governor's name, and they are responsible for ensuring that the state government functions according to the Constitution. While real executive power lies with the Council of Ministers, the Governor's discretionary powers allow them to influence political processes, especially in situations where no party has a clear majority. This intervention directly affects centre-state political dynamics.

Secondly, the Governor acts as an **agent of the Union government**. Under Article 156, they serve at the pleasure of the President, which effectively means the Union executive controls their tenure. This enables the Centre to exercise influence over state administration indirectly. Governors send periodic reports to the President on the state's constitutional functioning, and these reports often form the basis for invoking **Article 356**, which imposes President's Rule. Historically, misuse of this power has been criticized for weakening federalism and increasing central dominance.

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