



**BLOCK 4**

**PARTY SYSTEMS AND ELECTORAL  
POLITICS**

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UNIVERSITY

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## **BLOCK 4 INTRODUCTION**

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Party systems and participation of people in elections indicate the level of success of democracy in a country. Three units in this block discuss three important elements of democracy in India states - party systems, elections and leadership. Unit 9 is about the state party systems. Units 10 and 11 deal with electoral politics and state politics in Indian states, respectively.



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## **NIT 9 STATE PARTY SYSTEMS\***

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### **Structure**

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Meaning of Political Party and Party System
- 9.3 Party System the States during the Era of Congress Dominance
- 9.4 Party Systems in the States during the 1970s-1980s: Broad Features
- 9.5 Party Systems in the States since the 1990s
  - 9.5.1 Multi-party System in the States
  - 9.5.2 Two-party System in the States
- 9.6 References
- 9.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 9.8 Answer to Check Your Progress Exercise

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## **9.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the meaning of the party system;
- Differentiate between the patterns of party systems in various states;
- Discuss the changes in the state party systems over the years; and,
- Relate the nature of party systems with social and economic structures in the states.

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## **9.1 INTRODUCTION**

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In representative democracies, the people elect their representatives, and it is the representatives who frame laws on people's behalf and form a part of the executive. It is mainly political parties that field candidates in elections to represent people in the legislative bodies. Since elections are essential in a democracy political parties become crucial. Political parties generally perform the role of interest aggregation and interest articulation by forming and running the government. Thus, in a representative democracy the political parties, put forward candidates and campaign actively to support their candidates. Political parties and their candidates, who get elected to legislative bodies, represent the demands and aspirations of the people. There are several political parties in Indian states. In this unit, you will read about the party systems in the Indian state.

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## **9.2 MEANING OF POLITICAL PARTY AND PARTY SYSTEM**

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There is a general agreement among political scientists about the meaning and aims of political parties. A political party is an organisation that aims to get

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representation in the government through the candidates. Its main purpose is to get power. The candidates contest elections as members of political parties or supported by them to represent people in the legislative bodies. In a democratic country, different political parties compete to get the support of the people. According to Schwartz & Lawson (2005) a political party is 'an organization that nominates candidates to stand for election in its name and seeks to place representatives in the government'. The Party system denotes the number of political parties in a country. Single party systems show the presence of a single party where other parties are either absent or insignificant; two-party or bi-party system shows the presence of two parties, and multi-party system means that there exist more than two parties in a country or the provinces (states in India). Thus, the presence of number of parties in the Indian states shows the nature of party systems in the states. Based on their support base and recognition by the election commission political parties can be categorised as national parties, state/regional or registered/unrecognised parties. On several occasions, especially for contesting elections or forming governments, parties have formed alliances or fronts. Membership of such alliances or fronts changes according to the political needs of political parties.

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### **9.3 PARTY SYSTEMS IN THE STATES DURING THE ERA OF CONGRESS DOMINANCE**

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The Party system in Indian states can better be understood in connection with the party system at the national level in India. In India, the party system till the late 1970s was known by the dominance of a single party, the Congress. Rajni Kothari termed as the period from the 1950s-1960s as an era of Congress dominance or of "Congress dominated System" or simply the "Congress System". In most states, like at the all-India level, single party system had existed. However, in some states, there existed some parties (non-Congress parties) along with the Congress. For, example, the Communist Party of India (CPI), had a strong support base in Kerala and in Jammu and Kashmir, respectively. In Kerala, the CPI had led government during 1957-1959. With the 1960 assembly election in Kerala, the INC could not bag majority of seats and formed the government in alliance with PSP and Muslim League. Nagaland, too had a non-Congress government, led by the Naga Nationalist Organization which was formed in 1963 following the assembly election there. Although in some states more parties than the Congress had existed during the first two decades after Independence, in Political Science parlance, it was still known as the era of single party dominance, as conceptualized by Rajani Kothari. By the late 1960s, the era of Congress dominance in the Indian party system ended. It was reflected in the formation of governments led by a coalition of the non-Congress parties known as Sanyukta Vidhayak Dal (SVD). These states included Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Madras and Kerala. Several factors caused the decline of the Congress. These factors included factionalism within the Congress in the states, and resentment among the people against the party. The reasons for this resentment were food crisis caused by famine and drought, regional disparities, language conflict in south India, etc. The non-Congress parties such as the SSP, PSP, CPI, Jana Sangha, RPI mobilized people against the failure of the Congress to meet the aspiration of people. This contributed to the decline in the dominance of the Congress and rise of regional parties. Decline of the Congress happened along with the rise of regional parties and regional leaders.

The patterns of regional party systems in different states were as follows: Two party systems, multi-party systems. From the 1970s till the 2020s, two-party system or multi-party systems existed in different states of India. In the two-party system is marked by the predominance of main political parties in a state. But it does not mean that other parties do not exist; it means that the two parties are most influential, and the parties other than these two have marginal influence. In the multi-party system, more than two parties play a decisive role in the politics of a state. The number of political parties in states keeps changing. The emergence of new parties, the disintegration of old parties is a continuous process, which depends on several factors. Most important among these factors are include split with an existing party because of internal competition or factionalism within a party; the rise of new leadership representing some social groups; dissatisfaction among the people about the existing parties to fulfil their aspiration. The following section deals with major patterns in party systems the states since the 1970s, i.e., after the era of one party dominance. The section discusses the characteristics of party systems in different states.

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#### **9.4 PARTY SYSTEMS IN THE STATES DURING THE 1970S-1980S: BROAD FEATURES**

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Thus, after the 1967 elections, there emerged a bi-party or multi-party system in Indian states. The poor performance of the Congress in the 1967 election was the result of resentment of people against the Congress in different states which grew since the second half of the 1960s. Major features of the party systems in Indian states during the 1970s-1980s were marked broadly by prevalence of the two-party system. However, in several states there also existed more than two parties, but the party system of dominated by a bi-polar party system. In this bi-two party system, two parties were more influential than the other parties. The parties other than the two major and influential parties enjoyed marginal positions. One of the major parties was the Congress, which existed in most of the states, and its main rival party was a regional party in almost every state. While the Congress had originated in the national movement, its rival parties in the states, were born out of the decline of the Congress since the late 1960s and represented the aspirations of people in different states. They also symbolized regional aspirations and were generally founded and led by regional level leaders. There are examples of the two-party systems from various states that existed during the 1970-1980s. In Uttar Pradesh, Charan Singh, founded a regional party in 1969, known as the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD). It had its principal support base among the farming communities such as Jats, Yadav, and Kermis in regions of UP. These communities had benefitted from the land reforms in the entire UP, and from the Green Revolution in the western part of UP. The BKD, and the Congress were two most influential parties in UP at that time. Apart from the Congress and the BKD, there had also existed other parties (socialist parties with different denominations – Socialist Party or Sanyukta Socialist Party) which were relatively less influential than these two. During 1977 and 1980, the Janata Party became the main political party in India relegating the Congress to the marginal position. It had led governments at the centre as well as in several states. The Janata Party was formed because of merger of some parties that had opposed the Congress Party, especially imposition of emergency (June 1975-March 1977). The parties which were merged to form the Janata Party included the Jana Sangh, Bharatiya Lok Dal, the Congress (O), and CFD (Congress for

Democracy). However, the Janata Party did not survive for long. It got disintegrated due to internal dissensions. Following its disintegration, some parties that had originally merged to form the Janata Party resumed their independent identity with different names. In UP, the party founded by Charan, came to be known as first as Janata Dal (S), and later first DMKP (Dalit Mazdoor Kisan Party), and then as Lok Dal. It continued to exist until after Charan Singh's death in 1987. In 1988, it got merged along with other parties such as Janata Party, Janata Dal (Secular), Indian National Congress (Urs), and Jan Morcha to form the Janata Dal (JD). Until then, the Congress and the Lok Dal were two main parties. Bihar provides another relevant example of the bi-polar or two-party system of the 1970s-1980s. In this state, before the formation of the Janata Dal, the main opposition to the Congress was provided by the Socialist parties, Janata Party or the Lok Dal. The split in the Janata Party in 1979 led to its in Bihar also: Lok Dal emerged after the split in the Janata Party. Lok Dal and the Congress remained two major parties in Bihar. And Lok Dal was replaced by the Janata Dal in 1979 after its merger into the latter. In the states such Punjab, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Himanchal Pradesh the features of two-party system were represented in by the presence of two parties. While the presence of Congress was common in all these states, each had a specific opposition party. The opposition to the Congress was provided by All India Akali Dal (Akali Dal) in Punjab, by the BJP in Rajasthan, by the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra. The non-Congress parties claimed to represent the aspirations of the states where they existed. It is important to note that along with the two main parties, other parties had also existed during the 1970s-1980s in several states. But the other parties either were not highly effective or existed for a short period. This made the two-party system as the main feature of the system during the 1970s-1980s in several states.

**Check Your Progress 1**

- Note:** i) Use the Space given below for your answer.  
ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What led to the decline of the “Congress system”?  
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- 2) Narrative the basic features of the party systems in Indian states during the 1970s-1980s.  
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## 9.5 PARTY SYSTEM IN THE STATES SINCE THE 1990S

The period from the 1990s-2010s has seen the existence of multiparty or two-party systems in Indian states. The process of multiplication of political parties or their fragmentation has become remarkable feature of party system in some states in India during this period. And in some states, the party system is marked by the presence of two-party systems. This period is also linked with the introduction of economic reforms in India. One result of it has been growing influence of the regional parties in a federal structure. In this context, Saez (2002) in his study in the beginning of this century found that in as many as twelve states of the Indian Union, regional parties occupied a prominent position in the state legislatures and formed governments in several states. You must be knowing that there are 28 states in India, and 8 Union Territories. They have bi-party or multi-party systems. This unit will discuss with examples the party systems in some states from the 1990s. These examples will help to understand the broad features of party systems in almost all Indian states. An increase or decrease in the number of political parties in a state is reflective of changes in the society as well as relationships among different political parties, among the leaders or factionalism within the parties. The social groups which emerge due to the changes in society, faction leaders within the parties or lack of opportunities for proper positions within the main parties for some leaders are principal reasons for the increase in the number of political parties. As you read in the previous sections of this unit, during four decades from the 1950s till the 1980s, there has been a shift in the party systems in Indian states from the dominance of a single party, the Congress, to a broadly two-party or bi-polar party system. The party system in Indian states again witnessed significant changes from the 1990s. During this period, the number of political parties in many states has multiplied. This indicates the presence of a multi-party system as a significant feature of the party system in Indian states. Indeed, some states in India have come multi-party system while the others still follow the two-party system. In the literature on political parties, the emergence of multiple parties in the states, has been described as multiplication or fragmentation of parties. This section deals with the characteristics of party systems in some states of India during the 1990s and the 2010s. It does so with the examples of party systems in some states. These examples represent broad characteristics of party systems in almost all states.

### 9.5.1 Multi-party System in the States

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and several other states have multiparty systems. With examples of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Tamil Nadu, this sub-section of the unit discuss the state party systems. Multi-party system became a dominant feature of the state party system in India from the 1990s onwards. The Process of multiplication of political parties began in the late 1980s with the emergence of the BSP. The BSP sought to address the problems of the Bahujan Samaj or majority of the social groups in the society. In the BSP's perspective, the Bahujan Samaj includes groups which are marginalized in Indian society – the OBCs, Dalits, women, and religious minorities. Although the BSP has its support base among different social groups, largest group of its supporters are Dalits. Its leader Mayawati became chief minister four times in the 1990s and 2010s. It focused on social welfare programmes for the marginalized groups, and on recognition

of cultural symbols associated with the Dalits and other marginalized communities. Apart from the BSP, there have been existing or existed other parties in UP during this time. These are the BJP, the Congress, the Janata Dal, the RLD, Samajwadi Party (SP), and various small or caste-based parties. Among these parties, the Janata Dal had existed for a short period after being formed in 1988. Within a few years of its formation, the Janata Dal in UP had split into two parties – one RLD led by Ajit Singh and SP led by Mulayam Singh. Over the period, the influence of different parties in UP has been varying in different elections. During this period, the influence of Congress declined while that of the BJP and other parties increased. Except Congress, SP, BSP, RLD, BJP and some small and caste-based parties have been part of government formations at different points of time from 1993 till late 2020s. They have been part of government formations either as coalition partners or members of alliances or fronts. From the late 1990s, UP has seen the emergence of single caste or small parties. Many of them are formed by leaders of individual marginalized castes, OBCs or MBCs. These examples include Apna Dal founded by Sonelal Patel, and later by his daughter Anupriya Patel became a minister in NDA government (2014-2019). Most of these parties have been formed by the OBC or MBC leaders who were earlier in the BSP as members of the Bahujan Samaj. Because of feeling of not getting proper recognition by leaders, especially those from the MBCs in the BSP or other parties, they have set up their own parties (Singh 2021). Leaders of such parties bargain with the major political parties BJP, BSP or the SP for making alliance to contest elections or to get fair share in governments formed by the main parties.

In Bihar, there has been existing multi-party system since the 1990s. Various parties in this state can be identified as follows: the RJD, the JD (U), LJSP, BJP, the Congress, and some small parties such as HAM (Hindustan Awam Morcha) led by Jitan Ram Majhi, and RLSP (Rashtriya Lok Samata Party) led by Upinder Kushwah. Their names and numbers keep changing. The parties other than the Congress and the BJP can be identified with a leader who founded it. An important feature of the parties such as RJD, JD (U), LJSP is that they had emerged out of split in a common party – the Janata Dal (JD). As you have read above, the Janata Dal was formed by V.P. Singh. While in UP, the JD had split into two parties – the SP led by Mulayam Singh, and RLD led by Ajit Singh, in Bihar it split into three parties at different point in time, and RJD led by Lalu Prasad Yadav, JD (U) led by Nitish Kumar, and LJP led by Ram Vilas Paswan. Indeed, all three of them shared common political and ideological background. They participated in the JP movement prior to imposition of emergency in 1995; and believed socialist ideology, espoused by Ram Manohar Lohia and Jaya Prakash Narayan. They also represented socially marginalized communities – OBCs and Dalits. Although these parties got support from different social and economic sections, each of these had stronger support base among the caste to which their leaders belong. Despite sharing common background, they formed separate parties. The main reasons for formation of different regional parties out of the JD had been political competition among the leaders. Formation of new parties, their merger or formation of alliance between them and the national parties is an important feature of multiparty system, like in several other states. Split, merger and alliances of political parties are more common in the context of electoral politics and government formation. For instance, the JD (U) was further divided into Hindustan Awam Party (HAP) led Upendra Kushwah and Jitan Ram Majhi respectively. Upendra Kushwah who remained leader of Samata Party for some



years, form Rashtriya Samata Party in 2009 but he merged it with the JD (U). But he left JD (U) to form Rashtriya Lok Samata Party. The Rashtriya Lok Samata Party got merged with JD (U) again. Jitan Multiplication of political parties is an indication of reflects competition among different social groups for their share in power structure. This has been marked by the decline of the Congress in the state, and expansion of BJP's support base across communities, and formation of parties led by leaders from OBCs, Dalits. The expansion of the BJP from the 1990s has been much more dramatic than the decline of the Congress. In the assembly elections its performance in the 1990s was spectacular though in states where regional parties have gained ascendance, its performance had not been so dramatic except in Maharashtra, Punjab, Assam etc.

Tamil Nadu has shown patterns of the multiparty system from the 1990s. In the 2020s, some of the parties in Tamil Nadu are DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam), AIDMK (All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam), PMK (Pattali Makkal Katchi). These parties are largely known as Dravidian parties. Tamil Manila Congress (TMC), MIM, CPI, CPI (M), the Congress, the BJP, etc. Some of the parties in Tamil Nadu can be identified with the names of their leaders. The Dravidian parties are inspired by the Dravidian ideology which seeks to provide self-respect to the people. They also seek to protect Tamil language and Dravidian culture. The DMK was earlier known as DK: in 1949, the DK became DMK under the leadership of C.N. Annadurai. In 1972 – DMK split into two with AIDMK becoming a new party. Dravidian parties came to occupy a dominant position in the party system in the state from the 1960s. Prior to that time, the Congress was the dominant party in the state like in most states in India. But in comparison to the Dravidian parties, especially the DMK and AIDMK, the support base of the Congress, BJP the communist parties, is smaller. In 1977, the DMK was split resulting in the formation of the AIADMK led by M.G. Ramachandran. According to Narendra Subramanian (2002), the formation of multiple parties out of the principal Dravidian parties was a result of autonomy and flexibility which was given to the cadre in these parties.

### 9.5.2 Two-Party System in the states

Even though the multi-party system became a dominant feature of the state party system in India, there exists a two-party system. In some states. Rajasthan and Punjab are some examples of the states which have largely two-party system. This sub-section is about two-party system In these states, unlike the states that have multiparty systems, various caste groups such as Dalits in UP, who have formed the BSP or the OBCs in UP and Bihar who have parties such as SP, RLD, RJD and JD (U), such caste groups have not formed separate parties in these states. Nor small parties or parties by the single caste have been a significant part of party systems there. However, sometimes some small parties also appear in these states. But their existence has been relatively insignificant. Thus, these states have a broadly two-party system. The principal reasons for prevalence of two-party systems or the absence of a multiparty system in some states have been the absence of realization by politicians or leaders of social groups/castes to form separate parties by the principal caste groups, or political leaders, nature of social and economic structures in these states, accommodation of interests of major groups or leaders in the main political parties. These main parties form a two-party system. Besides, factionalism or competition within the main parties do not result in split in the major parties leading to the formation of new parties.

The two-party system in Rajasthan is represented by Congress and the BJP. Each of these parties formed governments in Rajasthan at different points of time from the 1990s. Politically Influential Castes (PICs) such as Jats, Rajputs, and Brahmins have been accommodated in both parties – the BJP and the Congress. The other castes, such as Dalits or the Most Backward Classes (MBCs) are Politically Marginalized Castes (PMCs) in the state. They are not able to form separate parties unlike in UP. However, some high caste and MBC leaders had formed a party in 1999– RSJF (Rajasthan Social Justice Forum) to oppose the Congress for recognizing Jats as an OBC in the state. The party ceased to exist within a few years of its emergence. In some areas of the state – Sikar and Jhunjhunu, the CPI (M) has got support base (Singh 2021). In Punjab, three parties have marked their presence – the Congress, the Siromoni Akali Dal known as Akali Dal and the BJP. The Akali Dal has a strong base among the Sikh farming community, especially the Jatt Sikhs. The support base of the BJP is stronger among the urban areas than in the rural areas. In the politics of Punjab, the Akali Dal and the BJP have been allies until September 2020, when the Akali Dal had quit BJP-led NDA due to differences on the farmers’ acts.

**Check Your Progress 2**

- Note:** i) Use the Space given below for your answer.  
ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Identify the features of the state party systems in India from the 1990s.

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2) Explain why small parties or single parties emerge in some states.

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**9.6 REFERENCES**

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## 9.7 LET US SUM UP

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A political system implies a number of political parties that exist in a country. In the context of the state politics in India, state party system indicates number of political parties which exist in each state. The State party system in India has changed since the 1950s. In the first two decades after Independence, the party system at all India level as well as in Indian states was dominated by the Single party, the Congress. The Congress of that time was called the Congress system by Rajni Kothari. During the 1950s-1960s, the party system in the states was dominated by the Congress as the single party, though in some states the non-Congress parties had also existed. By the end of 1960s, the Congress system had declined. And in the next two decades, i.e., the 1970s-1980s, the two-party system, or bi-polar party system, became the dominant feature of state party system. Different states happened to have two or more than two party systems. The period from the 1990s saw multiplication or disintegration of party system. Several parties emerged in this period. The multiple parties also included small or single caste parties in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar or Tamil Nadu. Although the multi-party system became a dominant feature of the state party system during this phase, there has also been two-party system in existence during this phase.

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## 9.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The Congress system declined because of the following reason. The resentment among the people against the Congress in meeting the needs of the people. The resentment occurred due to food crises just after a decade of the first general election in India. The non-Congress parties mobilized them against the Congress for inability to address people's problems. Besides, factionalism within the Congress became more intense. This was reflected in Congress decline in several states by the end of the 1960s.
- 2) The main features of party systems in Indian states were marked by the dominance of two-party systems, one of these was the Congress. Some of the parties which provided opposition to Congress were set up by the leaders who had quit Congress towards the end of the 1960s. These leaders and the parties represented regional aspirations. For around three years (1977-1980), some opposition parties merged to form the Janata Party. Following the disintegration of the Janata Party, some of the parties that had merged to form the Janata Party, appeared with different names. For example, the Jana Sangha became the Bharatiya Janata Party.

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) The dominant features of the state party systems from the 1990s show multiplications or fragmentation of political parties. It indicates the existence of multi-party system in most states in India, though in some states two-party system has been existing during this period. This happens due to internal competition within the parties, among different leaders. More parties can accommodate a large number of diverse groups.
- 2) Small parties or single caste parties are usually formed by leaders of marginalized castes. Their leaders feel that they do not get fair representation in the main political parties. This feeling motivates them to form parties led by them.

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## UNIT 10 ELECTORAL POLITICS\*

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### Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Explaining Electoral Politics
- 10.3 Electoral Politics and Democratisation
- 10.4 Changing Patterns in Electoral Politics
- 10.5 Issues in the State Elections
- 10.6 References
- 10.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 10.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 10.0 OBJECTIVES

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This unit is about electoral politics in Indian states. After going through it, you will be able to:

- Explain the meaning and scope of electoral politics;
- Discuss the relationship between electoral politics and democracy in India;
- Identify the patterns in the state electoral politics; and
- Discuss the main issues of mobilisation in electoral politics.

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### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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Electoral politics is related to politics that occurs in the context of elections. Although elections take place at a specific period of time, electoral politics starts even before elections are held. Thus, electoral politics involves not only the occurrence of elections but also patterns of mobilisation by political parties and leaders for voting in the elections. The conduct of elections in a free and fair manner, and extent of participation of people from various social groups is considered as a way to measure the success of democracy. In India, the introduction of the universal adult franchise after the implementation of the Constitution in 1950 has enabled every adult (with some exceptions) who is 18 years old or above to elect its representatives in the elections and after attaining some age to become a candidate to contest elections. First time all adults in India were eligible to participate in voting was the general election held in 1951-1952. Prior to that, there was no universal franchise in India: it was restricted franchise. It means that voting rights and right to contest elections was restricted certain sections of society who possessed wealth, paid rent to the government, had educational qualifications. In terms of the participation of people, there are two types of elections – direct elections and indirect elections. In direct elections, people directly elect their representatives. In the indirect elections, people elect their representatives indirectly, through the MPs at all India level, MLAs or MLCs at the state levels. Indirect elections are held for the posts of President,

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Vice-President or the Members of Rajya Sabha. In this unit, you will read about the electoral politics in Indian states with reference to direct elections. Electoral politics in India takes place with the purpose of electing representatives into three kinds of institutions – the Lok Sabha, Legislative Assemblies, and institutions of local governance such as Panchayati Raj Institutions in the rural and municipalities in the urban areas. In India, between 1951 and 1971, general elections to the Lok Sabha and elections to the legislative assemblies were held together. Since 1971 they have been held separately. Indeed, the frequency of elections in India to Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies has been increasing over the years, especially since the 1990s.

Elections are the hallmark of liberal constitutional democracy. India adopted a federal system of governance, and has a provision for an institution of Election Commission for conducting and managing free and fair elections. Part XV of the Indian constitution deals with the elections for the parliament of India and legislative assemblies and councils in the states. According to Article 324, the Election Commission of India is the institution responsible for the management of elections at the union and the state level. Article 170 of the Indian constitution has provisions about elections for the state assemblies.

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## 10.2 EXPLAINING ELECTORAL POLITICS IN INDIAN STATES

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There is a lot of literature on electoral politics, and party systems and leadership associated with electoral politics in India. The subject to study elections is known as Psephology. The literature provides us with broad features of electoral politics in India. As you have read in unit 1, in India, state politics as a subject of study became popular following the decline of the Congress by the late 1960s. And as you have read in unit 9, by this time there emerged state level parties in several states. Some of these were founded by prominent leaders who had strong support base in their respective states. Many of these leaders emerged were earlier member of the Congress. Emergence of regional level leaders and parties reflect the rise of various social groups and their aspirations in different states. These aspirations were largely related to region, caste, language, religion, culture, etc. Such political parties (also recognized as regional or state parties) gradually acquired a crucial role in national-level politics during the 1990s.

Some of these leaders played an important role in national level politics and policy formations at that level. Charan Singh's is an important example in this context. Initially having influenced politics, policy making and provided leadership in his home state, Uttar Pradesh until the 1960s, he played a decisive role in formulating policies at the centre (especially during the Janata Party regime in 1977-1979), and in the politics of north Indian states such as UP, Haryana and Bihar. He was also Prime Minister of India for a brief period. Leaders such as Charan Singh and the socialists within the Janata Party regime were effective in shaping agrarian policies and highlighting question of reservation for the OBCs in the central government institutions. Their efforts resulted in the appointment of the Mandal Commission in 1978 by the Janata Party regime with Morarji Desai as Prime Minister. This trend was reflected in some states at that time; reservation for the OBCs in the state government jobs in UP and Bihar by the Janata Party governments. The number of state level parties, leaders increased from the 1990s. The rise of the BSP established by Kanshi Ram in the north

Indian states and of the BJP has brought the question of social justice and role of religion into the focus of mobilisation in electoral politics. Besides, as you have read in unit 9, there exist more parties than one in Indian states. The number of parties implies the type of party system. And in India, there are broadly two types of party systems: two party system or multiparty systems. Electoral politics is marked by competition among them. It is important to note that electoral politics in the states is not confined to the state level or regional parties. Even the national parties participate in them. Thus, in the electoral politics in the state, both kinds of parties - state and national parties participate, either as independent identities or in alliance with the regional or national level parties.

Elections in India have been studied since the 1960s. Broadly three methodological approaches have been used to study elections in India: survey research, ‘ecological’ analysis, and fieldwork or ethnography. Rajni Kothari and Myron Weiner pioneered survey-based election studies in India. From the 1960s, election studies have passed through different phases. After a gap of around two decades, election studies became again popular with the study of the 1984 Lok Sabha election by David Butler and Prannoy Roy (Singh 2021; Ch. 4). Different scholars studied politics in different states. Attempts to study politics have continued since then. These studies focused on different aspects of state politics – elections, parties, leadership, and patterns of mobilization. Election studies became more popular from the 1990s onward. The leading role in conducting election studies in India is played by the *Centre for the Studies of Developing Societies* (CSDS). Besides, election studies are conducted by individual scholars. Apart from election studies, a pinions poll on voting patterns is also a subject matter of analysis. Election studies and opinion polls are different. The scope of the former is broader; it seeks to relate the electoral process with social, economic and political factors or contexts. The latter is confined to knowing the opinion of voters about their choice of voting in elections.

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### 10.3 ELECTORAL POLITICS AND DEMOCRATISATION

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Since the last decade of the twentieth century, two important developments took place in electoral politics in India. First, the participation of diverse sections of society in voting in the elections increased. These sections included mostly the marginalized sections of the society – women, tribals, Dalits, OBCs and rural classes. A vigilant election commission and rise in level of political consciousness on the significance of voting has resulted in participation of larger people in elections. Second, the profiles of people’s representatives in the state legislative assemblies have undergone remarkable changes. In the initial decades after independence people’s representatives mostly belonged to economically and socially more privileged groups. This trend witnessed a shift during the late 1980s, and the composition of the parliament became much more diverse. Apart from the high castes, participation of people’s representatives belonging to the OBCs, Dalits, and women, etc has increased substantially.

However, their composition is not uniform across the states. Different studies covering different states edited by Christophe Jaffrot and Sanjay Kumar (2009), *Rise of the Plebeians? The Changing Face of Indian Legislative Assemblies* shows that the profiles of people’s representatives with reference to caste, gender, age, occupation and age have undergone changes. It has a larger share of the

plebeians. However, there are variations in this pattern across the states in India. Some observers have argued that electoral politics in India has led to an increase in democratisation. Generally, weaker sections – Dalits, OBCs, women, religious minorities have been alluded to as *bahujans* (majority sections of society) in academic and popular discourse. The increase in their participation in elections from the last two decades of the twentieth decades has been conceptualized as their “second democratic upsurge” by Yogendra Yadav (2000).

**Check Your Progress 1**

- Note:** i) Use the Space given below for your answer.  
ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Discuss the meaning and scope of electoral poitics.

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2) Explain the relationship between elections and democracy in India.

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### 10.4 CHANGING PATTERNS IN ELECTORAL POLITICS

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The elections in Indian states have witnessed a paradigm shift in the past few decades. The shift can be seen in some patterns in the electoral politics; alliances and fronts of the regional parties with national or state level leaders; the increasing role of smaller parties led by single caste leaders or small parties in electoral politics of some states such as UP, Bihar and Tamil Nadu; and increasing role of money and crime. Some examples can illustrate these patterns. In UP, the BSP had made alliance with the SP in 1993-1995 and formed the government after winning the 1993 Assembly election, and formed government four times with the help of the BJP between 1995 and 2007. In northeast India, the regional parties have formed North-East Democratic Alliance (NEDA). Small parties such as Apna Dal and Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) in eastern UP bargain with the national or regional parties including the BJP to have an alliance for a share in power; Rashtiyra Lok Samata Party (RLSP) led by Upendra Kushwah or Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) led by Jitan Ram Majahi in Bihar bargain with the bigger regional parties such as JD (U) or RJD. Generally, such parties press for the acceptance of demands about recognition of social and cultural



symbols and social justice. Several smaller parties such as ADMK, PMK, MDMK or MIMK led by individual leaders and identified with specific castes have come to play an important role in the electoral politics of Tamil Nadu. In addition, there has been a close nexus between the regional political parties and business groups. The former need money from business groups to contest elections. If they win elections and form the government, they repay business groups by promoting the business interests of these groups (Baru 2021). Besides, along with money, crime also impacts electoral politics in India. It is important to note these are not the only issue, as you will notice in the next section, there are social, economic, cultural, political, etc. factors that impact electoral politics (Vaishnav 2017).

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## 10.5 ISSUES IN THE STATE ELECTIONS

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There are various issues determine the people's choice in elections. These issues are of different types – economic, social, cultural and political. The number these issues are unlimited. However, there are some impacts on the daily life of the people. Some of these issues are – availability of employment, price rise or inflation, school and hospitals, road and transport facilities; social justice, welfare programmes, recognition of social, religious cultural symbols of different social groups, governance (transparency or absence of corruption, efficacy, accountability), law and order, etc. Different political parties and leaders mobilise people on these issues. In their campaign, they explain the stances of their parties or those of the governments led by them on such issues, and criticise the positions of their opponents. With the rise of political parties identified with Dalits, and OBCs in north and the BJP since the 1990s and the presence of such parties in south India, especially in Tamil Nadu since before the issues about caste-related justice (OBC reservation at all India level or division of the OBC quota), recognition of cultural symbols associated with different castes, and religion-based mobilization have been the principal focus of electoral mobilization. BJP has made consistent effort to create a larger pan-Indian religious identity. The BJP's agenda of cultural mobilization has witnessed a major change in the past few decades. Electorally, it has shown flexibility to accommodate and mobilise various social groups with the purpose to create a pan-Indian identity. BJP's increasing vote share across the states in various elections can be seen as a success of the party's strategy. Even as the issues mentioned above have been common issues in electoral politics in different states, in specific regions, the concerns of those regions are the prime focus of mobilization in elections. For example, in Northeast India, protection of regional and ethnic identities and political identities has been prime focus of election campaign. Similarly, before the formation of new states of Uttarakhand, Jharkhand or Telengana, formation of new states used to be principal issues of mobilization. Depending on the political context and expediency, the parties and leaders opposed or supported such demands. In the demands relating to regional identities, some regions alleged that their regions were discriminated against in comparison to other regions, by state or central governments or by the leadership belonging to other regions; and their problems can be resolved by getting states of their own or by some kind of political autonomy. Such demands keep coming up from time to time in India, and on several occasions become issue of mobilization in elections.

In the past some years, the increase in the role of social media, governments' attempts to popularise their policies through large public hoardings, news-paper

advertisements, and electronic media usage has generated public consciousness. This had made the campaign for different parties more challenging. Unlike in the decades prior to the 1990s, people have better access to the information about governments' policies and performance, as well as the role of the opposition. In this unit, you will read some examples of the relationship between issues and electoral politics. These examples will provide some broad patterns of relationships between issues and electoral politics.

In some elections, the issues emerging from the economic reforms introduced in 1991, also found reflections in the state politics, including the electoral politics. Leaders of various parties in the state also tried to evolve their own model of economic growth and development. Different leaders focused on different sectors of economic growth. India also witnessed a range of policy experiments with regards to different sectors by various state level parties. Some issues caused by the economic reforms also became a focus of elections in some states. While some argued that decreasing the role of the state will impact the welfare policies adversely, others argued that it will remove restrictions from private sector. Chief Ministers in different states vied to attract private investment in their respective states. It included Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) also. They attempted to evolve their own model of economic growth and development. Different leaders focused on different sectors of economic growth.

India also witnessed a range of policy experiments with regards to different sectors by various state level parties. Chandrababu Naidu's efforts to make Hyderabad a software industrial hub, S M Krishna's efforts to make Bangalore a new centre of service sector development, or efforts of Narendra Modi as chief minister of Gujarat to invite more FDI in infrastructural developments are some such examples. Acquisition of land for setting up factories or Special Economic Zones (SEZs) became a necessity for attracting private investment. In some states, acquisition of land became central to mobilization in electoral politics. Two examples are relevant to politicization of land acquisition in electoral politics: One, politics of land acquisition in western Uttar Pradesh; and in Nandigram in West Bengal. In both cases, electoral politics took place on the question of land the acquisition by the respective governments. In UP, the government led by Mulayam Singh acquired land in 2004 from farmers for setting up a power plant in Dadri (Gautam Buddha Nagar). Mayawati-led government acquired land in the 2007 for developing Yamuna Expressway and developing Megacities (Singh 2020). Land acquisition by both governments was an issue of political mobilization in 2007 and 2008 Assembly elections. Similarly, in West Bengal, land acquisition for setting up Nano factory by the Left government became an effective issue in the 2011 Assembly election. This issue was a major factor that led to the defeat of the Left Front in West Bengal, and victory of TMC and the formation of its government. In the 1990s, in assembly elections, farmers had opposed Dunkel Draft that had sought to make reforms effective in agriculture.

The introduction of economic reforms in India almost coincided with the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report. It gave rise to a demand for recognition as OBCs by some castes in which might enable them to avail of reservation or other policies about affirmative action in some states such as by Jats in Rajasthan and Haryana; by Patels and Marathas in Gujarat and Maharashtra; demand by Gujars of Rajasthan for recognition as STs; the demand for sub-division of OBC quota between more backward sections and less backward among

the OBCs in different states; demand of some MBCs (Most Backward Classes) in UP for their recognition as STs or SCs. These issues became a focus of the campaign in varying degrees in different state level electoral politics. Indeed, the agitation of Jats for their inclusion in the OBCs list in Rajasthan on the occasion of the 1999 Lok Sabha election resulted not only in their recognition of OBCs in Rajasthan but also in UP and Delhi after that.

### Check Your Progress 2

**Note:** i) Use the Space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Identify the patterns in the electoral politics in Indian states.

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2) Explain the significance of the issues in electoral politics.

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## 10.7 LET US SUM UP

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Elections are an important aspect of democracy. They are the process through which people elect their representatives to legislative bodies through whom they participate in decision-making. The conduct of free and fair elections is an indication of a healthy democracy. In India, there exists provision for a universal adult franchise, which means that every adult who is 18 years of old and above has right to vote. Elections have been the subject of analysis, which covers studies of elections in known as Psephology. In India, election studies have passed through various phases since the 1960s. They have become more popular since the 1990s, and several institutions, news agencies, and individuals are involved in election studies. In the past some years, the participation of marginalised sections of society – Dalits, tribes, women, poor, etc., in electoral politics has increased. This has led some scholars to argue that democratisation in the country has increased. Although there are a large number of issues that directly concern people and are often mentioned by political parties, only some of them become central to election campaign. These issues can be broadly categorised as social, cultural, religious; economic – employment, price rise, development, education, health; political representation; or social justice. But an emphasis on the issues varies from election to election. And the impact of issues on elections is not always reflected in election results.

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## 10.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Election is a process through which people elect their representatives to the legislative bodies. It is a device that enables people to exercise their right to convey demands to political parties or political leaders. In elections, the people have options to choose between different leaders. The scope of electoral politics is wider than the elections. It includes mobilisation of people by the leaders and parties to vote for them in elections; competition between different parties and leaders. It also includes issues and grievance concerning that public and their impact on electoral results.
- 2) Scholars have argued that the extent of people's participation in elections is an indication of the success of democracy in India. There is a broad argument that over the years, the participation of ordinary people in elections has increased. It has got accelerated, especially since the 1990s. Since then, participation of the marginalised sections of the society such as Dalits, OBCs,

women, tribes, etc. This has made India more democratic, and there is “democratic upsurge” in India.

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) As the scope of elections is wide, which includes not only the process of voting in elections but also several other aspects relating to elections, it is easier to understand electoral politics by identifying certain patterns. Some important patterns that have arisen in electoral politics in India since the last decade of the twentieth century are as follows: the increase in participation of the subaltern sections; competition in the state level politics between the state level parties and leaders and the national level parties and leaders; formation of fronts and alliances of parties before and after elections; and increasing significance of issues based on identities such as caste, religion, region, language, etc.
- 2) Issues and demands of people are central to political mobilisation in elections. These issues are related to cultural, social, political and economic aspects. Although there are innumerable issues which concern people, in the election campaign some issues become more important than others. As to which issue is more important than the others depends on the political context. It also varies from region to region. However, despite the fact the issues are important, campaign on them does not always impact the results of elections.



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## UNIT 11 LEADERSHIP\*

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### Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Leadership during the Nehruvian Era (1950s to mid-1960s)
- 11.3 Emergence of the State Level Leadership
- 11.4 Leadership from the 1990s
- 11.5 Women Leadership
- 11.6 References
- 11.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 11.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

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### 11.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the meaning and significance of leadership in India;
- Identify the characteristics of leadership in Indian states;
- Discuss the changes in nature of leadership over the years after Independence; and
- Explain the process of emergence of leadership.

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### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

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In a democracy, leadership is one of the important parts of the political system. It plays multiple roles. It helps articulate the interests of people, formulate policies for them; provide an ideological orientation when needed; chalk out strategies to mobilise them into collective action, and represent them in the elected bodies at different levels. These roles can be played as a single act by a single leader. Or different roles can be played by different leaders. Some leaders do not join a party or an institution formally. They lead people in an apolitical way, in the sense that, they do not form a party. In a culturally diverse society such as India, there are leaders that represent different identity groups – caste, language, region, gender or religion. They mostly focus on the issues that concern the specific group. Although they may also form a political party or contest elections, generally, they play the role of community leaders. This unit does not deal with the community leadership which only exclusively focuses on the internal affairs of their respective communities. Instead, it deals with the leadership that is related to political institutions of the State such as the leadership in terms of PM, CM, MLAs; leaders of political parties; or mass leaders of political/social movements. Unlike in undemocratic or authoritarian political system, in a democratic system, the leaders who do not belong to ruling dispensation are acknowledged as the opposition leaders. They help the ruling leadership in modifying their policies for better accountability. In this unit, you will read about some important aspects

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of leadership of different types: chief executives such as chief ministers and other elected representatives, mass leaders, charismatic leaders, and the like. It is noteworthy, that in India there are a large number of leaders. Their large numbers make it difficult to deal with all of them individually. Therefore, this unit will focus on some patterns of leadership characteristics in India since Independence, instead of focusing on all of them. The unit deals with leadership in terms of different phases of their rise and role: (1) Leadership during Nehruvian Era (1950s-mid-1960s); (2) Emergence of Regional Leadership (Late 1960s-1980s); (3) and Leadership in the Neoliberal Era, i.e, from the 1990s onwards.

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## **11.2 LEADERSHIP DURING THE NEHRUVIAN ERA (1950S TO MID-1960S)**

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The leadership in India during the first two decades following Independence, especially during the Nehruvian era (1950s to mid-1960s) played a decisive role in laying out the foundation of a modern India. A large number of the leaders of that time were product of national movement and had contributed to political ideals and values which guided the process of social and economic change in the country. They were intellectuals who reflected on social, economic and political transformation in the light of democratic principles. Some of them had participated in shaping the Constitution of India by participating in the Constituent Assembly debates. Indeed, they were a link between the national movement and post-Independence period. Among the leaders, this period included Jawaharlal Nehru, BR Ambedkar (died in 1956), Jayaprakash Narayan, Shyama Prasad Mookerjee (died in 1953), Lal Bahadur Shastri, E.M.S. Namboodari pad, Ram Manohar Lohia, Jay Prakash Narayan. Indeed, reflecting true democratic nature of Indian politics of the initial phase following Independence, the Nehru cabinet consisted of leaders from the Congress party as well as those of the non-Congress such as B.R. Ambedkar and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. In contrast, some leaders of the Nehruvian era were a part of the government, some mobilised people and critiqued government's policies from outside the government. In this phase, Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister of India played a leading and decisive role in shaping strategies and policies for the development of India. The developmental model introduced by Nehru came to be known as the Nehruvian model. It visualised modern India on the principles of secularism, non-alignment, and mixed economy. In this model, the state played a leading role in formulating and implementing policies. The state created the Planning Commission to help formulate its development strategy.

This was also the phase of Congress dominance which was marked by the Congress System, as conceptualised by Rajni Kothari. The Congress dominance implies that in most states, the governments were led by the Congress. In this system, while at the national level, the leadership and policy direction was provided by Jawaharlal Nehru, at the state level it was provided by the state level leadership – in most states of the Congress and in some states, such as Kerala, by the Congress as well as the non-Congress. Although the blueprints of these policies and directives were provided by the national level government (Union List), an actual implementation of these policies was done at the state level. Thus, the national and state level leadership played decisive roles in introducing policies across the states – land reforms, welfare policies, affirmative action, development of institutions and infrastructure. Although these policies could not meet with

the aspirations and requirements of people, they did lay the foundation of a modern India, and the decisive role in it was played by leadership of the Nehruvian era. The dominance of the Congress party or of the Congress system did not mean that the non-Congress leadership was absent in the country. What it meant was that the Congress provided leadership in most states but in several states the leaders of the non-Congress parties played an important role. For instance, in Kerala, the communist leader Nambudiripad led the Kerala government for two years (1957-1959); an experiment has never done anywhere in the world, where a communist-led government was formed following an electoral victory. The government under the leadership of Nambudiripad implemented land reforms in Kerala. The leaders from socialist parties such as the SSP/PSP, Gandhians produced a critique of the policies of the Congress government, and underlined the significance of need for the policies concerning welfare of farmers and reservation for the OBCs, especially in the North-Indian states such as Bihar and UP. In the south of India, C.M. Annadurai highlighted the significance of self-respect and the culture of the Tamil populace.

The period following the death of Nehru in 1963 was marked by a shift in the nature of national level leadership. This was also a period in which the popularity of the Congress declined. Food crisis, drought, inflation contributed to the resentment of people against the dominant party and leadership – the Congress. The opposition leaders belonging to socialist parties such as SSP, PSP; the Jana Sangh, Swatantra Party, the communist parties, the Republican Party of India mobilised peoples into movements in non-electoral politics and the resentment against the Congress was reflected in the defeat of Congress (in 1967-1969) elections. In the post-Nehru phase, the Congress factionalism within the Congress party intensified, posing challenges to its leadership in several states as well as at the All India level to the leadership of Indira Gandhi. This resulted in the emergence of the state level leadership in the late 1960s and 1970s and formation of the new parties by them. Some of these leaders graduated from the state level to national level leadership. This also heralded the end of the Congress System and era of Congress dominance. The following section of this unit deals with the patterns of leadership during the late 1960s-1980s.

**Check Your Progress 1**

- Note:** i) Use the Space given below for your answer.  
ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Identify the characteristics of leadership in India during the Nehruvian phase.  
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- 2) Discuss the emergence of state level leadership during the late 1960s-1980s.

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### **11.3 EMERGENCE OF THE STATE LEVEL LEADERSHIP (LATE 1960S-1980S)**

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The defeat of the Congress in 1967-1969 elections in several states marked the end of the Congress system and it was accompanied by the emergence of new leadership. Some of them were in the Congress and were also active in politics in the pre-Independence period. Their differences within the Congress over policy-issues and strategies, and factionalism within the Congress led to their exit from the party. They founded their own parties and represented the aspirations either of specific states, regions or of social and specific groups. Those among them who had an enduring impact on the state politics were Charan Singh in north India (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Haryana); Devi Lal in Haryana; Biju Patnaik in Odisha; Jyoti Basu in West Bengal; Karunanidhi and MG Ramachandran in Tamil Nadu. Some even graduated to impact national politics drawing their support from specific state or the region. This trend continued until next two decades – 1970s-1980s. Although some of them were active in the politics of their states even prior to the 1970s, by this time, they played leading roles either as the chief ministers or the opposition leaders. Karpoori Thakur in Bihar; NTR in Andhra Pradesh, Dev Raj Urs in Karnataka are some examples which represent this pattern of leadership. Some of them became symbols, guides and ideologues of social groups and parties espousing the cause of marginalised communities. The emergence of the state level leadership has been explained in the literature in the following way: It was marked by a rise of the aspirations of new social groups – farmers and backward classes who had benefited from state policies such as land reforms and green revolution and who looked for an alternative leadership at the local levels. Kachan Chandra (2004) argues that leaders separate parties from their original parties when they find “representation blockage” in the latter.

Likewise, Charan Singh (1902-1987) provided leadership to the farming communities and other backward classes in north India, especially Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. He participated in the national movement and remained in the Congress until 1969. He was the chief minister of UP twice. He quit Congress in 1969 and formed a party – the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD)/BLD/LD. An author of several books, he has been described as an “organic intellectual” by T.J. Byres (1988). He played a leading role in the formulation of land reforms policies in Uttar Pradesh; mobilised the other backward classes, especially the farming communities; while within the Congress he critiqued the policies of the Congress, especially the resolution that aimed to introduce cooperative farming. After remaining inactive at the state level politics, in 1977, he merged his party in the Janata Party and was Minister of India, and Prime Minister for a few months (July 28, 1979 - January 14, 1980). His ideas and personality continue to influence politics in north India, especially of the farming the community and backward classes (Singh 2014).

Jay Parkash Narayan (1902-1979), popularly known as JP, was a socialist leader who participated in the national movement. In the post-Independence period, his most important role was to mobilise people against the authoritarian rule, which resulted in the imposition of emergency. This movement is known as JP Movement. He mobilised various sections of society, especially the students, into the JP Movement. JP sought to bring about changes in the social, political and economic structure of the society. He termed such transformation as Total Revolution. He was incarcerated during the emergency. After his release from jail following the lifting of emergency, he was instrumental in the formation of the Janata Party. This party emerged from the merger of five parties. He never joined any government. Some youth leaders who had joined the JP Movement have been continued to play a leading role in Indian politics. Laloo Prasad Yadav, Nitish Kumar, Ram Vilas Paswan and Shushil Kumar Modi are among such examples. Two of them became chief ministers in Bihar; one occupied an important position in the Union Ministries, and one had been an opposition leader in Bihar.

N.T. Ramarao (1923-1996). He was an actor in the Telugu film industry. He formed the Telugu Desam Party in 1982. He was chief minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh. Indeed, he was the first non-Congress chief minister of the state. He mobilised diverse sections of Andhra Pradesh on the question of restoring the Telugu Pride, Telugu *Jati Gowravman* (self respect of Telugu people). He complained that the central governments led by the Congress did not treat the leaders from Andhra Pradesh respectfully. And he promised to restore it by forming a government run by the Telugu Desam. He introduced in the state of Andhra Pradesh to populist policies such as mid-day meal scheme for school children, supply of rice and cloth for the poor, construction of houses for the poor and backward classes, subsidised electricity charges for the farmers.

Karpoori Thakur (1924-1988) occupies a special place in the leadership — of India, especially in the Hindi-speaking region. He participated in the Indian National Movement and was the chief minister of Bihar twice. He was a member of the Bihar Legislative Assembly for around four decades. He was a socialist leader. As the chief minister of Bihar, he introduced reservation policy for backward classes through a formula that came to be known as “Karpoori Thakur Formula”. According to this formula, he subdivided the reservation quota meant for the OBCs into different categories, Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs) and other sub-groups. -. The Karpoori Thakur Formula often becomes a reference point in the discussion on reservation policies for the OBCs. After his death, Laloo P. Yadav and Nitish Kumar emerged as leaders with a strong support base among the backward classes in Bihar. In the 1980s, Assam saw the emergence of new leadership. This leadership emerged from the student movement. In Assam, the six years’ movement (1979-1985) anti foreigners’ movement was led by the All India Assam Movement. After the movement was over, the students who launched the anti-foreigners movement founded a regional party, the AGP (Asom Gana Parishad). Some leaders of the AASU became leaders of the AGP, and Prafulla Kumar Mahanta became the chief minister of Assam twice. Indeed, the BJP leaders – Sarbanand Sonowal and Hemanta Biswa Sarma, both became chief ministers of Assam, started their political careers as student leaders. It is noteworthy that emergence of leadership in Assam from the student represents a pattern in leadership in Northeast India. In almost all states of northeast India, several leaders graduated from student politics.

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## 11.4 LEADERSHIP FROM THE 1990S

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The characteristics of leadership from the 1990s can better be understood if we situate them in the political and social context of this period. You have read that between the 1950s and 1990s, the role of the state as defined by the Nehru's leadership was dominant in devising and implementing the policies. The leadership from 1991 functioned and emerged in a changed context. Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, along with the Finance Minister, Manmohan Singh, introduced reforms. The reforms provided a decisive role to the market, along with the state in relation to development in the country. Manmohan Singh later (2004-2014) became Prime Minister of India. This period also saw an increase in the role of identity politics, especially based on caste (Dalits and OBCs), religion, and women. These changes were reflected in the nature of leadership. Characteristics of some of the leadership during this period are associated with those in the preceding period. Some of the important characteristics of leadership of this period are on New generation of OBC and Dalit leadership; women leadership; the role of dynasty in the formation of leadership, increase in the role leadership that underline the significance of religion-based cultural nationalism.

You have read in the previous section that during the 1960s-1980s, there had emerged leadership in different regions of India. The process of emergence of leadership, especially among the OBCs and Dalits, continued in the forthcoming period. Despite their differences, such leadership shared a common vision on social justice and welfare. They sought inspiration from the intellectuals, leaders and ideologues who espoused the cause of marginalised groups. For instance, in the Hindi belt, the personalities and ideas of B.R. Ambedkar, Ram Manohar Lohia and Charan Singh influenced the Dalit and OBC leadership (Singh 2014). Inspired by Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram formed the BSP, and Mayawati became the first Dalit woman chief minister. In the initial years of his term as chief minister of Bihar, Laloo Prasad Yadav gave priority to self-respect of lower castes over development. Among the priorities of the Nitish Kumar as the chief minister of Bihar included the education of the girl child. He provided cycles to the girl students under the *Cycle Yojna* to enable them to commute to their schools. In post-Independence India, there are examples both at the national level and in the States, in which leaders heading political parties, Members of Parliament or legislative assemblies, prime ministers, ministers belong to political families. It means that the family members of such leaders have held some positions in political institutions in the country. The relationship of a leader to his or her family's political background is often viewed in terms of dynastic politics. Some of the contemporary leaders belong to the second, third or even fourth generation members of their families in politics in different capacities. Earlier generations of some such leaders participated in the pre-Independence period, including the national movement, while those of some entered politics in the post-Independence period. A pioneering book on the relationship between dynasty and democracy in India *Democratic Dynasties: State, Party and Family in Contemporary Indian Politics*, Cambridge University Press (2016), edited by Kanchan Chandra, conceptualises dynasties in a democracy such as India as "democratic dynasties". With reference to the Indian parliament, the book argues that dynastic politics is shaped in the structures of two modern political institutions – the state and political parties. The book elaborates on the argument that political families join politics with the expectation that their association with the state office ensures their returns,

and the organisational weakness of political parties increases the possibility of members from political families getting tickets to contest elections. The voters in elections chose members from dynastic politics in the light of the structures of the state and political parties.

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## 11.5 WOMEN LEADERSHIP

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The leadership in India is dominated by men. However, the towering presence of Indira Gandhi (1966 -1977 and 1980 - 1984) marked the presence of women in mainstream politics, especially in the role of the Prime Minister which did bring out a visual change from the otherwise male-dominated space of leadership. Various debates have gone into making it more feasible formally for women's presence in politics. The demand for granting women reservation in the legislative bodies, is one of them, which has not yet been accepted. However, the provision of 33 percent reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and municipalities has resulted in the representation of these women in the local institutions of governance. Although women leadership in these institutions has faced challenges of deep-rooted cultural conditioning by patriarchy, a gradual increase in their participation has made women confident and conscious of their rights. At the State levels, in the post-Independence period, women have provided leadership in various states as chief ministers with varying duration of their tenures on office. Some examples of this are: Sucheta Kripalani in Uttar Pradesh; Anandiben Patel in Gujarat; Anwara Taimur in Assam; Mahbooba Mufti in Jammu and Kashmir (before the state was bifurcated into two Union Territories – Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh); Mayawati in Uttar Pradesh; J. Jayalalitha in Tamil Nadu and Mamta Banerjee in West Bengal; Rabri Devi in Bihar. Three of these leaders – Mayawati, Mamata Banerjee and J. Jayalalitha may be seen as representative examples of women leadership. Mayawati (b. 1956), the leader of the BSP, became chief minister of Uttar Pradesh four terms between 1995-2007. Influenced by ideologies and life of B.R. Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram, as chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, she introduced policies of the welfare of Dalits and backward classes, especially through the Ambedkar Village Programmes. She also devised policies and schemes for recognition of cultural symbols associated with thinkers and icons espousing the cause of social justice. Mamta Banerjee. Among the three, Mamta Banerjee's case is different. The parties to which Mayawati and J. Jayalalitha belonged were founded by their leaders, BSP by Kanshi Ram and AIADMK by M.G. Ramachandran; but Mamata Banerjee's party, TMC (Triamual Congress) was founded in 1999 and is led by Mamata Banerjee. Mamata Banerjee was also a Union Railway Minister in the NDA government led by Atal Bihar Vajpayee. She entered politics as a Youth Congress leader, and left the Congress to form the TMC. She mobilised farmers in Nandigram and Singur against the land acquisition by the Left front government. She became chief minister of West Bengal thrice: 2015-2016; 2016- 2021, in 2021. She formed her first government after defeating the Left Front, which ruled West Bengal for 35 years.

**Check Your Progress 2**

- Note:** i) Use the Space given below for your answer.
- ii) Check your answers with the model answers given at the end of the unit.

1) Discuss the nature of leadership in the economic and political context in the 1990s.

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2) Write a note on the nature of women leadership in India.

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**11.6 REFERENCES**

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## 11.7 LET US SUM UP

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Leadership is an important aspect of the democratic political system. In India, leadership has played a significant role in building modern India. Leadership operates in various capacities – as chief ministers, opposition leaders, members and leaders of political parties or non-party leaders. In the post-Independence period, the leadership in India can be viewed in three phases: **Nehruvian** phase (1950s to mid-1960); mid-1960s to 1980s; and, 1990s onwards. In the first phase, the national leadership under Nehruvian model introduced a model of development in which the state played a dominant role. However, the policies under the Nehruvian model could not meet the aspiration of people until the 1960s. In such a context, leaders belonging to different non-Congress parties mobilised people on their issues. This period was also marked by factionalism within the Congress party. It was reflected in the decline of Congress by the late 1960s. In the following two decades, several leaders emerged in different states. Some of these leaders played important role in national or regional politics. The leaders in this phase represented various social groups – farmers, OBCs, Dalits, regions, and gave new direction to Indian politics. The context of the emergence and operation of leadership changed in the 1990s due to the introduction of economic reforms. Unlike in the earlier period, from the market along with the state, assumed a leading role in policy formation and implementation in various states. This period has also seen an increase in the role of identity based on caste, religion, gender and religion and politics. Consequently, leadership belonging to different identity groups have emerged in Indian states. This period has also witnessed the rise of women leadership, although in comparison to men, their number is much less. Besides, several leaders belong to political families.

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## 11.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- During the Nehruvian period, leadership mostly belonged to those who had participated in the Indian national movement. As this was the era of Congress dominance, in most states of India, the political regimes were controlled by the Congress party. The policy orientation of the leadership was influenced by the Nehruvian model, in which the state has played a dominant role in social transformation of the country. The non-Congress leadership also played a decisive role in critiquing the policies of the government and mobilisation of people.
- The period from the late 1960s to 1980s saw the emergence of state level leaders in different regions of the country. This has happened because of the decline of the Congress from the late 1960s, and changes in society due to the impact of the state policies, and rising aspirations and ambition of some leaders. Some of these leaders formed new political parties.

### Check Your Progress 2

- The political context from the 1990s in India was marked by the implementation of economic reforms. This made the market and the state as an agency to give direction to the development of the country. The political context was marked by increase in identity politics. This resulted in increasing role of leadership from marginalised communities such as Dalits, OBCs and women in Indian politics.
- In the post-Independence period, women in several states have occupied leadership positions and chief ministers and party leaders. Some of them have contributed by devising and implementing policies for social welfare and development, and some have mobilised people into collective action. Mayawati, Mamta Banerjee and J. Jayalalitha present examples of such leaders.

