Indian Politics' Nature An Analytical Study on the Obstacles to National Integration

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Abstract

The essence of Indian politics has been developed and centred on many historical, social, economic, religious, and many other cultural traditions of the country, much like any other political system. Everyone is aware that the makeup and culture of a society have an impact on how effectively a political system functions. In terms of Indian political culture, it is still in the embryonic stage of transformation and is continually developing new elements. Once again, the characteristics of Indian politics are used as reasons why national integration is in danger. National integration is basically the psychological tying together of a nation's citizens, or, to put it another way, their sense of unity. A critical analysis of Indian politics shows that the country's unity is in jeopardy for a variety of reasons, none more so than the nature of Indian politics themselves, including the influence of caste, regionalism, communalism, linguism, and politics of minorities, backward classes, agitation, rallies, and violence, as well as politics of secession, disintegration, and terrorism.

Keywords: National Integration, Transitional Stage, Indian Politics, Culture, and Nature

Introduction:

 The historical, social, economic, religious, and a variety of other societal traditions have all influenced the character of the Indian political system, just as they have with every other political system. Simply put, it indicates that a political system cannot entirely escape from its social, economic, and historical context. Everyone is aware that the makeup and culture of a society have an impact on how effectively a political system functions. Indian political culture is still in its early stages and is continually developing new characteristics and trends. Once again, the characteristics of Indian politics are used as reasons why national integration is in danger. National integration simply refers to the political, social, and cultural ties that unite a nation's citizens, or, put another way, it refers to their sense of unity. Critical analysis of the nature of Indian politics reveals that a number of factors, including caste, regionalism, communalism, linguism, politics of minorities, politics of backward classes, politics of agitation, rallies, and violence, politics of secession, disintegration, and terrorism, pose a threat to the nation's unity.

The main goal of this essay is to examine how Indian politics have evolved into issues of grave concern and a barrier to national cohesion. This essay offers solutions to these problems as its conclusion.

Indian politics' nature:

Indian politics have taken on characteristics that reflect the nation's social, economic, religious, and geographic circumstances. These unique circumstances have given Indian politics a distinctive form, which is defined by the following characteristics:

1. Caste's significance in politics.

2. Political significance of regionalism and linguistics.

3. Politics and the role of religion and communalism.

4. The politics of protests, violence, and agitprop.

5. The Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other Regressive Classes as Individual Political Groups.

6. Separation, dissolution, and terrorist issues.

7. The issue with charismatic leaders.

8. Fundamentalism or extreme religiosity

Caste's function in Indian politics

Caste is a major factor in Indian politics. In India, societal stratification is mostly based on caste and has a long history of doing so. Some castes were granted better positions and were denied social and economic benefits while the lower castes were not. The Varna system was the cornerstone of social stratification throughout the Vedic era. There were four Varnas in the Varna system: Brahmin, Kshatrya, Baishya, and Sudra. Each was given a set of responsibilities. However, throughout time the caste system expanded to include heritage status, which is decided by birth, and as a result it has started to divide Indian society. Even though many steps have been attempted to lessen the inequalities between the various castes in the post-independence era, the overall outcome is not very favourable. The caste system has a significant impact on Indian politics at all levels, giving it a unique personality. Every political party gives caste consideration a careful and comprehensive look while choosing candidates and ministry candidates.

However, it has an impact on the bureaucracy in addition to these. Caste politics in India have gained fresh momentum more recently because to the quota scheme. Following is a list of how caste affects several political facets:

Government policy has been impacted by caste; a clear example is the reservation policy that favours certain castes.

1. Elections and voting are heavily influenced by caste. On the basis of caste, political parties choose their candidates.

2. Political parties' programmes, strategies, and statements increasingly take caste into account.

Even among political parties, certain positions are assigned according to caste makeup.

3. The caste element also has an impact on who gets appointed to the government's council of ministers and other political posts.

4. Caste also serves as a political pressure group. Along caste lines, political negotiations are also conducted.

5. Caste considerations have also had an impact on the bureaucracy, or the administration. Caste factors have an impact on the postings, transfers, and appointments of public employees. Even public employees' conduct while performing administrative responsibilities is impacted by caste issues.

6. The survival of the political leadership in many political parties depends on the caste groupings that they represent.

However, as held by D.R. Gadgil and renowned sociologist M.N. Srinivas, many political professionals believed that the growing influence of caste in politics was a bad trend that was detrimental to the growth of democracy. Once more, some analysts take the other viewpoint and assert that caste plays a crucial role in advancing the democratic process. In their book, "Modernity of Tradition," American political analysts I. Rudolf and S.H. Rudolf express the opinion that caste politics in India have lowered caste differentiation and increased political equality among members of various castes.

Here, it is important to note that K.R. Narayanan, a former Indian president, correctly stated that "What is obstructing the unity and emotional integration of India is not so much the large divisions into regions, languages, and religions, but the atomization of our society into numerous castes, sub-castes, and tribes."

In Indian politics, communalism and religion coexist.

Due to the partition of India in 1947 along religious lines, it is clear that religious belief is extremely ancient and powerful in India. The British had very cleverly used the divide and conquer strategy for a long period prior to independence in order to maintain their position of power. However, it brought communalism into politics in the years after independence. Although the constitution's authors gave India a secular government, true secularism is still not evident in society. Even after India gained its independence, a number of political parties were founded along religious lines, such as the Akali Dal in Punjab for Sikhs. The newly established All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) in Assam similarly appeals to religious minorities for support and exclusively elects candidates from minority-dominated districts.

These things contributed to the sense of communalism, along with a few other things. The majority of communal riots in India were caused by political leaders who had limited interests in mind and pursued them.

The form of communalism has altered with time, however; prior to the 1970s, riots were mostly between Hindus and Muslims. In recent years, the confrontations have also affected other groups,

such as Hindus and Sikhs and Hindus and Tribal Groups. Fundamentalism in religion has recently helped to strengthen communalism.

Following the destruction of the Babri Masjid, racial unrest began to spread. The Mombay riot in 1993, which claimed more than 500 lives, and the Godhra event in Gujarat in 2002, which also claimed more than 500 lives, both put the nation's unity in grave jeopardy.

These have been observed by many political actors in India. As a result, several political parties have used Muslims as a "Vote Bank" at various points in time. In order to win over Muslim voters and members of other minority groups like the Sikhs and Christians, political parties have embraced an appeasement strategy. The minority leaders, on the other hand, have seized every chance to take advantage of the mainstream parties' shortcomings. In Indian politics, communalism stems from this. The following are some significant causes of the rise of communalism in Indian politics:

1. The Muslims in India believe they are more closely related to Muslims outside of India than to other Indian religious groups for a number of historical reasons.

2. Some Muslims, including some of their leaders, are anti-nationalistic and support religious fanaticism.

3. Leaders of the Muslim community in India have a minority mentality, fear psychosis, and attribute Muslims' social backwardness to communal differences. They constantly put the blame on the government and claim that it discriminates against Muslims for their lack of progress.

4. Indian Muslims are socially and economically disadvantaged, which puts them outside of the mainstream of society and feeds their fanaticism and segregation. As a result, they are weak and are easy targets for entrenched political interests.

5. The exclusive stance taken by our neighbour Pakistan toward Indian Muslims encourages separatism and extremism among Indian Muslims.

Together, these factors are what cause religious strife and a sense of communalism among Indians. Both Muslims and Hindus are experiencing a sense of communalism as a result of the current issue around the building of a temple in Ajodhya.The emphasis on communalism in politics has been attributed to political parties by several committees and commissions, including the Raghuvir Dayal Commission (1967), Datta Commission (1970), and Joseph Vithyasis Commission (1971).

Regionalism in Indian Politics:

India is a huge nation with a diverse population that includes many different religions and cultures. Thus, each location has unique characteristics according to cultural and geographic variables. In India, regionalism has given regional variety political significance. Simply put, regionalism is the attitude that residents of an area have toward their regional identities and interests as opposed to their national interests and national identity. If it goes too far, regional sentiment and nationalism come into direct confrontation, which triggers the formation of the process of disintegration and

secessionism. Some examples of regional uprising in India after independence include the North/South divide, the demand for greater autonomy, the son of the soil thesis, the interstate conflict over rivers, water, and territory, secessionist movements like Khalistan, and in North East India, the issue of Naga movement, Assam movement, etc. These uprisings occur as a result of the unequal allocation of resources among areas and different groups, which eventually causes a sense of relative deprivation among the disadvantaged groups or regions and is partially due to their increasing political consciousness. Assamese Bodo movements are another illustration of relative poverty.

As a result, regionalism is Indian politics' shark reality. In order to stress the diverse and distinctive regional identities of individuals, several regional movements have been formed. In diverse states like Kashmir, Assam, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Nagaland, etc., various movements are still in existence. The key causes of the perception of regionalism in Indian politics are as follows:

1. The call for independent nations.

2. A conflict between nations.

3. Some local communities in the area have demanded autonomy.

4. A sense of division between North and South India

5. Language politics and linguistic debate.

6. The federal government, according to the states, has a discriminatory attitude toward the state governments.

7. The Indian Union has a predisposition toward secession.

8. The emergence of political parties in the area and their preference for local problems and identities

9. The significance and influence of regional leadership are growing.

10. How neighbouring nations influence regional sentiment in certain areas of the nation.

Morris Jones contends that regionalism and the language debate have been so contentious in Indian politics and have been so intimately tied to current political events that it looks that they are the root of the country's problems with unification. It is clear from this that regionalism has seriously endangered the integrity and unity of the country. Integrating these regional energies and inclinations into the national mainstream is urgently needed to strengthen and prosper the country.

Problem of Linguism in Indian Politics

India is a country with a diverse population of faiths, regions, and languages. Along with the native Indian languages, the Mughals created Urdu, and during the British era, English was imported and elevated to the status of the primary language of communication. Therefore, both in higher education and government, the growth of local tongues was hindered at this time. This was another justification

for thinking of Indian native languages as inferior to English. Even after India gained its independence, English remained in the lead, with Hindi being designated as the official language or Rajbhasha, and regional languages restricted to their own states.

Political parties at the national and local levels eventually made language policy political. Supporters of regional languages do not like the central government's language policy. As a result, it turns into a conflicting rhetoric for both local and national government. It has been noted that if anti-English protests were started in Hindi-speaking regions, anti-Hindi protests were also started in South Indian states that don't speak Hindi. It has sometimes been claimed that Hindi is being imposed forcibly on regions where it is not spoken and that it is being pushed in government and educational institutions at the expense of other local tongues. There were protests and calls for several nations to designate "Urdu" as their second official language. There are several more minority groups speaking various languages in a single state in addition to these. As a result, speakers of that language are given preference in both educational settings and job possibilities. On the other hand, one regional language is often designated as the official language of a state. It led to acrimonious disputes between various communities living in the same state. Here, the Assamese language movement of the 1960s might be mentioned. Many tribal tribes, including the Khasi, Gharo, and Jayantia, were unwilling to accept the Assamese language as the official medium of instruction in Assam following the movement. As a result, they began agitating for a separate state, which led to the creation of Meghalaya in 1972. The discussion over rearranging states according to language began as soon as a country gained independence. Following widespread opposition to the demand for the separation of Andhra from the Madras Presidency for the Telegu-speaking population, the first Prime Minister of independent India, Pt. J.N. Nehru, appointed the State Reorganization Commission in August 1953 with members like Justice Fazal Ali, K.M. Panikkar, and Hridaynath Kunzru. As a result, states were reorganised in 1956 according to language, resulting in the declaration of the establishment of 14 states and 6 union territories. The North Eastern Reorganization Act of 1971, which went into force in 1972 and split the North East into seven states, also reorganised the states in the North Eastern region.

The reorganisation of states based on language in 1956 provided a solid foundation for the future continuation of this debate.

Language politics have caused unneeded debate in the nation and impeded efforts to achieve national integrity.

In Indian politics, there are scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward castes.

The Indian Constitution has specific provisions for the advancement and welfare of minorities and socially and educationally underprivileged people. The government's programmes and policies were focused on achieving that goal. These groups of individuals gained stakes in the continuation and growth of these institutions as they benefited from government initiatives. These social strata began banding together politically and taking on significant roles. Below is a more thorough explanation of what their position entails:

Politics of Minorities

In India, a group is considered a minority if it makes up a smaller portion of the population than the majority. There is no clear definition of the word minority in the constitution. Generally speaking, there are two classifications for Indian minorities.

1. Minority religions.

2. Minority linguistic groups

1. Religious Minorities: India is the centre of the world's faiths. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, and Parsis are India's main religions, along with Muslims and Sikhs. Hindus make up the majority of India's population (80%), followed by Muslims (13%), Christians (2.3%), Sikhs (more than 60% of whom have strongholds in the state of Punjab), Buddhists, and Jains in that order. All religious groups—aside from Hindus—are thus regarded as minorities. Despite all of this, Indians observe each event with the same dedication. In India, there are no religious differences. Both Hindus and Muslims in Mombay celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi and Eid.

Muslims:

Muslim people make up the largest number among all the minority groups, hence they have a significant influence on Indian politics. Through political haggling, they have attempted to further their own agendas. Their political demands include granting the Urdu language a special status, maintaining Muslim personal law, and providing Muslims with particular privileges in government and educational institutions. They have organised themselves into a number of groups, including the Muslim Majlis and Muslim League. Other non-political organisations and organisations, such as the Islamic Sevak Sangh and the Jamaite-Islami, are available in addition to these. Thus, India's Muslims have had an impact on Indian politics via both political and non-political groups. Muslims now have a significant position of influence in Indian politics thanks to the practise of considering them as "Vote Banks" and the resulting periodic appeasement of these groups by various political parties.

Sikhs:

Sikhs, who are a minority, are mostly found in the Punjab state. The main political party of Sikhs is Akali Dal, a local party active in Punjab. The main movement started by Sikhs after independence was the campaign for the establishment of Khalistan as a separate state.

Christians:

The majority of Christians are found in South India, notably in Kerala.

The political inclinations of Indian Christians have been a topic of discussion among political parties despite the fact that they do not have their own political organisation. In terms of political allegiance, Christians have typically supported the Congress Party. If they do not get enough representation, there is a specific provision for the nomination of Anglo-Indian MPs to the Lok Sabha.

2. Linguistic Minorities: The situation of linguistic minorities in India differs from that of religious

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minorities. Although there are several languages spoken in India, the majority of people speak Hindi. As a result, it is possible to classify all non-Hindi speakers as linguistic minority. Speaking the same minority language may bring individuals of many faiths together under the banner of that language. A good illustration of this trend is the anti-Hindi movement in South India. People who speak various languages now feel more politically identified because to the rearrangement of Indian states based on language. In India, the issue of language still has an impact on local and state politics.

Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes in Politics

The provisions of the constitution that provide certain groups of people with specific privileges, including reservation in public services, give rise to the political importance of SC/ ST and OBC. They are conscious of their unique status in India's political system primarily because of these factors. The Mandal Commission's (1979) proposal to institute a policy of reservation in favour of the Other Backward Classes was carried out by the V.P. Singh administration, which gave caste politics in India a new lease of life. Castes like Koch Rajbangshi in Assam and other groups are fighting for the right to be classified as OBC. To win the favour of the classes, political parties have engaged in reservation politics.

Agitational, violent, and rallying politics

Padyatras, Gherao, Hartals, and other violent protests have all been used as political weapons to forward political goals and get support from the public. Rajni Kothari refers to these procedures and actions as "direct action." All political acts that are not constitutional are referred to as direct actions.

India is rife with instances of various agitations and protests at the national and local levels.

For instance, Jai Prakash Naraian's Total Revolution Movement, the Bharat Bandh appeal made by several political parties, the 1992 Ayodhya Mandir Andolan, the 1993 Delhi Rally organised by the Bharatya Janata Party, etc. The significance and impact of these democratic activities in Indian politics are shown by these instances.

Therefore, these agitation actions not only interfere with law and order but also greatly annoy the general population. Although the effects go beyond this, many innocent individuals lose their lives and possessions in these agitations. Along with the increased danger, the government must spend a significant amount of money deploying police to quell such violent protests and agitations. These actions cause national loss, which impedes national advancement. In any democracy, legitimate peaceful requests may be made, but in a developed democracy, violent agitations that are just meant to show off political clout or seize political power cannot be supported. The country and democracy would be weakened by these unfavourable and aggressive agitations, which would hinder national integration.

National Integration Council's function (NIC)

The National Integration Conference was conducted by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in September and October of 1961 in order to identify strategies for overcoming the perils of communalism, casteism,

regionalism, linguism, and other similar ills and to come up with concrete solutions. In order to assess all issues relating to national integration and provide suggestions, this conference agreed to create the National Integration Council (NIC). In accordance with this, the NIC was established, and it met for the first time in 1962.

Purposes of the NIC

The National Integration Council (NIC) said the following in its mission statement at the 1968 meeting: "The cornerstone of our national existence is common citizenship, unity in diversity, freedom of religion, secularism, equality, justice-social-economic-political, and brotherhood among all groups. The NIC affirms its belief in these principles and pledges to work hard to uphold them.

The council, however, is concerned about the rise in racial events that has occurred in various sections of the nation in recent years. The council stresses that although there may sometimes be intergroup or other polarising confrontations, most ordinary men and women, regardless of their religious affiliations, live in peace and harmony and have no desire for violence or chaos. The NIC condemns trends that undermine national unity and calls on all political parties, nonprofits, other citizen groups, the media, opposition leaders, and really all good-willed people to put an end to them. They can do this by reducing regional hostility and racial prejudice, weaning society's misguided elements away from violence, actively and energically spreading the principles of tolerance and harmony, and more.

The council wants to make clear that this is not a government-only duty, even if governments must play a significant part in bolstering the forces of integration and swiftly and effectively putting the council's proposals into action.

All citizens, legislators, educators, artists, authors, instructors, parents, students, intellectuals, businesspeople, and union leaders have a joint responsibility for completing this mission.

No matter their linguistic, religious, ethnic, or cultural ties, the council cordially encourages all Indians to participate in this important and urgent mission of fostering unity and solidarity among all Indians.

Conclusion:

The unhealthy democratic practises and the aforementioned issues obstruct national integration even if the Indian government is dedicated to preserving the unity and integrity of the nation by upholding its principles and aims.

In addition to this, the Indian government has also taken steps to accomplish these goals, such as creating the National Integration Council in 1962, holding periodic conferences of state chief ministers and national integration conferences.

However, governmental and procedural efforts often fall short and are insufficient. Numerous issues with national integration are political issues with cultural and psychological components. The government should make sure that all groups, regions, and communities are treated fairly and equally

within the political system and practises. To meet the problems of maintaining national unity and integrity, political parties and the political leadership should put aside their limited interests.

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