

## POLITICAL CHANGE IN MODERN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

This paper examines the political changes in modern India, focusing on developments in governance, electoral dynamics, party politics, and citizen participation. It highlights the decline of the Indian National Congress's dominance and the rise of regional parties, resulting in coalition politics and increased influence of state-level parties. The growth of the **BhartiyaJanta Party (BJP)** has redefined the national political landscape, shifting it towards a right-leaning, nationalist ideology. Key themes such as judicial activism, electoral reforms, digital governance, and civic movements, including anti-corruption initiatives, are explored. The paper also discusses the role of identity politics, social movements, and constitutional changes in shaping India's political discourse. It concludes by analysing the challenges and opportunities presented by these changes and how India must navigate them to maintain democratic values in a diverse society.

### Key-words :

Political change, modern India, regional parties, coalition politics, **BhartiyaJanta Party (BJP)**, electoral reforms, judicial activism, digital governance, civic activism, identity politics, social movements, constitutional changes, nationalism, democratic values.

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Political change in modern India encompasses a range of developments influenced by shifts in governance, electoral dynamics, party politics, public policy, and citizen participation. Here are some of the key aspects of political change in modern India:

**Rise of Regional Parties and Coalition Politics**The dominance of the Indian National Congress (INC) began to decline in the late 1980s, leading to the rise of regional parties that catered to local identities, linguistic groups, and regional aspirations. This era marked the beginning of coalition politics, where no single party could secure an absolute majority, resulting in coalition governments at the center. This trend continues, with regional parties playing a significant role in state and national elections.

**Growth of the **BhartiyaJanta Party (BJP)****The **BhartiyaJanta Party (BJP)** has grown from a minor party in the 1980s to the dominant national force in Indian politics today. It achieved significant electoral victories, particularly in 2014 and

2019, under the leadership of Narendra Modi. The BJP's rise has shifted the political landscape towards a more right-leaning, nationalist ideology, focusing on Hindutva, economic reforms, and a strong central government. This shift has sparked debates on secularism, pluralism, and minority rights.

**Anti-Corruption Movements and Civic Activism** Public discontent over corruption and inefficiency in governance has led to several anti-corruption movements, such as the India Against Corruption movement in 2011, led by Anna Hazare. This movement galvanised public opinion and played a role in the formation of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which has positioned itself as an alternative to traditional parties by focusing on transparency, governance, and grassroots issues. **Judicial Activism and Accountability** the Indian judiciary has increasingly played a proactive role in holding the government accountable and safeguarding constitutional rights. Through Public Interest Litigations (PILs), landmark judgments, and suo motu actions, the judiciary has addressed issues such as environmental protection, human rights, corruption, and electoral reforms. However, judicial activism has also sparked debates on the separation of powers and judicial overreach.

**Electoral Reforms and Voter Awareness** There has been a push for electoral reforms aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and fairness in the electoral process. Measures like the introduction of the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT), and stricter regulation of electoral funding are steps in this direction. Voter awareness campaigns and the use of social media have also increased voter participation, particularly among the youth and marginalised communities. **Decentralisation and Local Governance** The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992) aimed to strengthen local governance by empowering Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). These reforms aimed to decentralise power, promote grassroots democracy, and ensure better delivery of public services. Despite these efforts, challenges like limited financial autonomy, political interference, and capacity gaps persist in local governance. **Identity Politics and Social Cleavages** Identity politics based on caste, religion, region, and language continue to influence political dynamics in India. Parties often use these identities to mobilise support and win elections. Issues like the Ayodhya dispute, caste-based reservations, and regional autonomy have shaped political narratives and electoral strategies, sometimes leading to social polarisation and conflict. **Digital Governance and E-Politics** The digital revolution has transformed governance and political engagement in India. Digital platforms like the Digital India initiative aim to make government services more accessible, transparent, and efficient. Social media has become a powerful tool for political communication, campaigning, and citizen engagement. However, it has also raised concerns about misinformation, hate speech, and data privacy. **Nationalism and Foreign Policy Shifts** India's foreign policy has seen significant shifts, reflecting a more assertive stance on global platforms. Under the current leadership, India has pursued strategic partnerships, a stronger defence posture, and a focus on self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat). The emphasis on nationalism has also influenced domestic policies, particularly concerning security, defence, and foreign relations

with neighbours like China and Pakistan. **Policy Reforms and Welfare Politics** Recent policy reforms, such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, and the controversial farm laws (later repealed), reflect attempts to modernise the economy, promote ease of doing business, and attract foreign investment. On the other hand, welfare politics remains crucial, with schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, and Ayushman Bharat aiming to address poverty, health, and social welfare. **Women's Political Participation** There is growing advocacy for increasing women's representation in political offices. The Women's Reservation Bill, proposing 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, remains a subject of debate. Women's participation in politics is slowly increasing, but it still faces significant barriers, including patriarchal attitudes, lack of resources, and safety concerns. **Protests and Social Movements** India has seen an increase in political protests and social movements, driven by civil society groups, youth, and marginalised communities. Movements like the anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) protests, the farmers' protests, and climate activism by young people reflect the active engagement of citizens in political discourse and demand for accountability. **Emergence of a New Political Culture** There is an emerging trend of a more personalised and media-driven political culture. The emphasis on strong leadership, personality-driven politics, and direct communication with the electorate is reshaping political campaigns and governance styles. Leaders are increasingly using social media to connect with voters, bypassing traditional media. **National Security and Internal Policies** Political discourse in modern India has increasingly focused on national security, internal security, and counter-terrorism. Policies like the abrogation of Article 370 (special status of Jammu and Kashmir), the National Register of Citizens (NRC), and stringent laws against terrorism have sparked debates on civil liberties, federalism, and minority rights. **Constitutional Changes and Debates** Recent years have seen significant debates over constitutional changes, such as the abrogation of Article 370 and the introduction of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). These changes have led to discussions on federalism, secularism, and the balance of power between the central and state governments. Political change in modern India is shaped by the interplay of democratic aspirations, social diversity, economic needs, and evolving ideologies. The country continues to balance its commitment to democratic values with the challenges of governance in a complex and diverse society.

In conclusion, political change in modern India is characterised by a complex interplay of various forces, including the rise of regional parties, the growth of the **Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP)**, and the increasing influence of social movements and civic activism. Developments such as judicial activism, electoral reforms, digital governance, and a shifting foreign policy reflect India's evolving democratic processes and governance structures.

Despite progress, challenges remain, such as ensuring transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in politics. Issues like identity politics, social cleavages, and debates on constitutional changes continue to shape the political discourse. As India navigates these changes, it must balance its democratic values with the diverse

aspirations of its people, while addressing economic, social, and security concerns. The future of Indian politics will likely be defined by how effectively the country adapts to these shifts and maintains its commitment to democratic principles in a rapidly changing global context.

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