



A Study on Leadership Traits in Emergence and Sustenance of Regional Political Parties in India

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Abstract

The paper highlights the emergence of Regional Political parties in India with special reference to factors favouring the Regional Political parties, the performance of Regional parties in the Lok Sabha Elections and the leadership traits helping for the sustenance of the Regional Political parties. The study is based on the secondary data sources obtained from the Central Election Commission, State Election Commission reports and party manifestos of select regional parties. The study reveals that ever since the first regional political party has stemmed in the Indian Political environment, there has been a constant increase in the existence of regional parties and at present in each of the 28 states represent a strong existence of regional political parties. Using the opinion polling approach, this study results in 13 leadership traits that are commonly observed in select regional political parties. The study on the growth of regional parties shows that regionalism, the desire for regional development, regional demands have influenced the parties and altogether these necessities have directed the growth of regional parties. The statistical results show that the regional parties have able to increase their presence in both houses of parliament through possessing leadership traits that have influenced public supports in the form of rising voting share.

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1 Introduction

The leadership styles and the leadership traits have emerged as qualities of emerging leaders who are assisting them to lead the parties at the State and National level. The emerging leaders

who are leading from the front in state politics have grown in politics with a unique set of principles supported by effective leadership traits. The various forms of styles such as Autocratic, Participative, Democratic, Beauracrat, Charismatic, Paternalistic and Transactional leadership are providing the leaders to be unique and helping them to lead the parties. Each leader has his own strength of possessing leadership traits and strategies which is assisting them in the execution of decisions. The emergence of regional political parties has provided opportunities for the emergence of new leadership with distinctive qualities. The possession of distinctive qualities and traits made them become popular leaders with strong command in the state as a regional political party and because of these leadership traits, the number of regional political parties have increased across the states in India. The progress at national level elections set the perfect example of how regional political parties have been putting their strong impression on national-level elections.

1.1 Regional Political Parties: An Avenue of New Form of Leadership

The emergence of regional political parties in India has created the avenue for the emergence of new leaders who are well capable of understanding the issues of regionality. The demands and expectations of the people in various regional areas of states were not met by the national parties and this scenario has led to the formation of regional political parties. Right from the emergence of regional political parties, most of the parties have been successful through effective leadership. The leadership traits possessed by the leader of leaders is another factor that has strongly influenced the development of regional political parties. The strong-hold of national parties were broken by the regional parties through effective leadership of the leader of leaders representing various regional parties. Over the years, many regional parties have a stronghold in the states due to the effective display of leadership qualities of the leaders. The leader of leaders representing various states were successful due to the leadership styles and traits. Leaders such as Pawan Chamling (Sikkim), Manik Sarka (Tripura), Shela Dikshit (Odisha), Naveen Patnaik (Odisha), have led their respective states for more than 10 years. The critical evaluation of these leaders will demonstrate the effectiveness of leadership traits influencing the success of the leaders and it reflected the emergence and sustenance of regional political parties.

1.2 The Emergence of Regional Political Parties

A political party is formed by a group of people who share common objectives of making a party primarily change the existing system or to represent their voice as a group and contesting the election to be a recognized party in India. Section 29A of Representation of People Act, 1951 approved by the Election Commission of India. The interest of the people is the main agenda for most of the regional political parties. The political party representing the state as a recognised state party is another view of the regional political party. India is one of the very few nations in the world which encourages the Multi-party system. This pattern of the system has facilitated the formation of many regional political parties.

The concern for regionalism and the significance of regional development were been the main agenda of regional parties. Factors that encouraged the growth of regional parties are

- a) The interest of the regional areas which have not been safeguarded
- b) The ethnicity and religious conditions
- c) Language issues
- d) Due to lack of concentration of regional development and lack of importance in national parties, emerging leaders have been coming out from national parties and forming regional political parties

In India, the demise of Nehru has led to a gap in the emergence of the leader of leaders. This situation has lead to the formation of new regional parties. The Proclamation of emergency has created strong agitation against the ruling government and caused the need for the formation of regional parties. The formation of the Janta Party is one of the important milestones in the emergence of regional parties.

Parties such as DMK, ADMK which were formed in the year 1962 have been very successful in Tamilnadu state. Going against Congress has made the Telugu speaking state witness the emergence of the Telugu Desam Party. The CPI(M) has been very successful since it is separated from CPI and has been ruled the West Bengal state for more than 2 decades. The Shiromani Akali Dal has been successful right from 1972 in Punjab. The Jammu & Kashmir National Conference has won many seats in Assembly since 1977 in Jammu & Kashmir.

1.3 Considerations for Formal Consideration of Regional Political Party

According to the rules prescribed by the Election Commission of India, the party which is formed at the state level will be formally considered as a state party which may be also referred to as a regional political party if it satisfies any one of the following conditions.

- a) A party will be duly recognised as a state recognised party if it secures 8 percent or more percentage of votes polled in the concerned state.
- b) If a party win at least 6 percent of the total votes polled and also wines at least 1 Loksabha or 2 Assembly seats
- c) Party will receive the status if it wins 3 percent of the total number of seats (or) 3 seats in the Legislative Assembly
- d) Party wins a minimum of 1 seat or more for every 25 seats of faction thereof allotted to the concerned state.

Party satisfying and fulfils any one of the above-mentioned criteria will be recognised as a state recognised party or regional political party. As per statistics of the Election Commission of India, 2020, 8 parties have received the national party status. Among the national parties, the Indian National Congress(1885) was regarded as the oldest party and the Communist Party of India (CPI) was the second oldest party that received the National party status. Among the state parties, 53 parties are recognised by the Election Commission of India as Recognised state parties. Among the recognised state parties or Regional political parties, AIMIM was the oldest party to be formed.

2 Literature Review

Jones (1996) investigated the leadership quality and the influence of personality traits. The author has opined that the change in the exiting beliefs and traits will strongly influence leadership. The author has applied the Monte Carlo Simulation to study the personality change of leaders who have participated in British General Elections.

The Economic Times (2009) report on leadership styles of top politicians in India has highlighted the emergence of leaders with distinctive styles. The report has presented the critical evaluation of 15 political leaders representing various regional and national parties through evaluating on Enneagram Tool. The tool has been used to understand and evaluate the distinctive personality types of select political leaders.

Vaishnav (2013) presented the reasons for the rising growth of regional parties. The author has studied the election results of the past decade and statistically observed that the shrinking margin is a proved point of rising growth of regional parties. Further, the author has also noticed the presence of 38 regional parties representation in the lower house of parliament. The author concluded that regional political parties have succeeded in changing the conventional system of electoral politics emerging in India.

Misra (2016) claimed that the regional parties have been playing a significant role in keeping the interest of regional issues and narrated the emergence of Shiromani Akali Dal(SAD), DMK, Biju Janata Dal and JDU. The author has studied the emergence of regional parties and observed that Shiromani Akali Dal was regarded as the oldest regional parties that emerged in India. The party was started in 1920 and the success of the Alkali Dal has given confidence for the emergence of many regional parties. The author noticed that most of the regional parties that emerged in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Telangana, Tamilnadu, Punjab and Odisha states are mainly led by a single leader who has large command over the party and the traits that are benefiting the leaders are the confidence and faith of the supporters on the leadership qualities of the single leader. One of the major limitations of the regional parties are most of the parties are driven by a single personality who has large control over the party progress. Further, the family politics and priority to relatives is causing hurdles towards the positive image of the party.

The Global State of Democracy report (IIDEA, 2017) has highlighted the emerging nature of political parties and their representation. The study more specifically concentrated on the changing pattern of trust by the public towards political parties. The four keys challenge as prescribed in the report which influences the existence and sustenance of political parties including:

- a) Delivery of results to address multifaceted challenges
- b) Restoring of sense of marginalized groups
- c) Ability to react to populism
- d) The approach towards its own party members and the electorate

The emerging challenges have created conventional regional parties to carefully concentrate on changes in the existing political environment. Sometimes, the fact-free promises and statements resulted in the increasing debate over the functionality of regional parties. The younger generations are more influenced by regional parties to get fast recognition which is lacking in national parties. Further, the younger generation is been the most attractive segment for regional parties. The activities are concentrated and made beneficial to youngsters and as results the youngest are getting attracted by regional parties.

This paper focuses on the study of factors favouring Regional Political Parties, and study the growth of regional political parties with special reference to recent election results. Also, this study analyzes the leadership traits contributing to the sustenance of regional political parties.

3 Data Sources and Methodology

The main sources of data are secondary data sources. The data obtained from the Chief Election Commission, Government of India are considered for the evaluation of the progress of regional political parties in the 2019 Parliament election. Further, select regional political parties manifesto have been observed to understand the leadership styles, traits and the way regional political parties have been convincing the people in different states. Further, the conceptual literature back up is extracted from books on Management Theories, Research reports, articles and review papers. The study is descriptive research with design-oriented. The opinion polling method is applied to understand and evaluate the leadership traits of select regional political parties.

4 Result and Discussion

From this study, the critical findings and discussion are presented.

4.1 Factors Favouring Regional Political Parties

The important factors that have motivated the leaders to initiate regional political parties are

- a) Relatively low cost of establishment of a party at the regional level in comparison with the national level.
- b) Mass following of leaders in the society
- c) Strong reachability due to command over the regional language
- d) The strong dominance of casteism in politics of the regional political parties
- e) National-level coalition government resulting in increasing membership to the regional parties
- f) The strong desire of people for the support of regional political parties to dominate in national elections.
- g) Coalition government era resulting in increasing voting share of regional parties.

4.2 Performance of Regional Parties in Lok Sabha Elections, 2019

The study on the performance of regional political parties in the Lok Sabha elections shows that most of the regional political parties which have been dominating the respective states have been positively influencing the national politics as their representation has been increasing over the years. Table-1 presents the detailed status of contesting of the parties. Among the total 345 seats which the political parties from state-level contested 135 seats have been won. The percentage of winning is 39 percent and this show that, the future of regional political parties is quite positive as far as the winning percentage is concerned. The proportion of voting has also been very progressive. Some regional parties have recorded over 30 percent of the total voting percentage which show that the people have been very positive towards the regional political parties. The statistics further reveal that parties including YSR Congress, Telangana Rashtra Samithi, Shivsena, Janata Dal, DMK, Biju Janata Dal were been dominating in the Loksabha elections. Further, to observe that the parties which have won the highest number of seats in Loksabha through participation were also been in ruling in the respective states. The dominance in the state has been helping the regional parties to grow at the national level.

The statistics further reveal that most regional parties have been participated in less number of constituencies and were able to get a good winning margin. The strong leadership driven by leadership traits have helped the parties to not only get a comfortable position in the state but also helped them to compete in national elections.

Table 1: Progress of Regional Political Parties in 2019 Parliament Election

Sl. No.	Party Name	State Name	Candidates			% of Votes Secured	
			Contested	Won	Defeated	Over Total Elector in the State	Over Total Votes Polled in the State
1	Aam Aadmi Party	Punjab	13	1	12	4.86	7.46
		NCT OF Delhi	7	0	3	10.97	18.2
		Party Total	20	1	15	7.35	11.63
2	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)	Tamil Nadu	21	1	0	13.38	18.72
		Party Total	21	1	0	13.38	18.72
3	Asom Gana Parishad	Assam	3	0	0	6.72	8.31
		Party Total	3	0	0	6.72	8.31
4	All India Forward Bloc	West Bengal	3	0	3	0.34	0.42
		Party Total	3	0	3	0.34	0.42
5	All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen	Telangana	1	1	0	1.74	2.8
		Party Total	1	1	0	1.74	2.8
6	All India N.R. Congress	Puducherry	1	0	0	25.47	31.85
		Party Total	1	0	0	25.47	31.85
7	All India United Democratic Front	Assam	3	1	0	6.36	7.87
		Party Total	3	1	0	6.36	7.87
8	AJSU Party	Jharkhand	1	1	0	2.89	4.39
		Party Total	1	1	0	2.89	4.39
9	Biju Janata Dal	Odisha	21	12	0	31.31	43.32
		Party Total	21	12	0	31.31	43.32
10	Rashtriya Lok Samta Party	Bihar	5	0	0	2.05	3.66
		Party Total	5	0	0	2.05	3.66
11	Bodoland Peoples Front	Assam	1	0	0	2.03	2.51
		Party Total	1	0	0	2.03	2.51
12	Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam	Tamil Nadu	4	0	2	1.59	2.22
		Party Total	4	0	2	1.59	2.22
13	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)	Tamil Nadu	23	23	0	23.72	33.18
		Party Total	23	23	0	23.72	33.18
14	Indian National Lok Dal	Haryana	10	0	10	1.33	1.9
		Party Total	10	0	10	1.33	1.9
15	Indigenous People's Front of Tripura	Tripura	2	0	2	3.42	4.2
		Party Total	2	0	2	3.42	4.2

Sl. No.	Party Name	State Name	Candidates			% of Votes Secured	
			Contested	Won	Defeated	Over Total Elector in the State	Over Total Votes Polled in the State
16	Indian Union Muslim League	Kerala	2	2	0	4.24	5.48
		Party Total	2	2	0	4.24	5.48
17	Janata Dal (Secular)	Karnataka	7	1	0	6.65	9.74
		Party Total	7	1	0	6.65	9.74
18	Janata Dal (United)	Bihar	17	16	0	12.5	22.26
		Party Total	17	16	0	12.5	22.26
19	Jammu & Kashmir National Conference	Jammu & Kashmir	3	3	0	3.54	7.94
		Party Total	3	3	0	3.54	7.94
	Jammu & Kashmir National Panthers Party	Jammu & Kashmir	5	0	5	0.43	0.96
		Party Total	5	0	5	0.43	0.96
20	Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party	Jammu & Kashmir	2	0	1	1.06	2.38
		Party Total	2	0	1	1.06	2.38
21	Jharkhand Mukti Morcha	Jharkhand	4	1	0	7.69	11.66
		Party Total	4	1	0	7.69	11.66
22	Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajantrik)	Jharkhand	2	0	0	3.35	5.08
		Party Total	2	0	0	3.35	5.08
23	Kerala Congress (M)	Kerala	1	1	0	1.61	2.08
		Party Total	1	1	0	1.61	2.08
24	Lok Jan Shakti Party	Bihar	6	6	0	4.5	8.02
		Party Total	6	6	0	4.5	8.02
25	Mizo National Front	Mizoram	1	1	0	28.3	45.12
		Party Total	1	1	0	28.3	45.12
26	National People's Party	Manipur	1	0	1	1.57	1.91
		Meghalaya	1	1	0	15.9	22.45
		Nagaland	1	0	1	1.24	1.49
		Party Total	3	1	2	6.88	8.81
27	Naga Peoples Front	Manipur	1	1	0	18.55	22.55
		Party Total	1	1	0	18.55	22.55
28	People's Party of Arunachal	Arunachal Pradesh	2	0	2	3.45	4.3
		Party Total	2	0	2	3.45	4.3
29	Rashtriya Janata Dal	Bihar	19	0	1	8.81	15.68
		Jharkhand	2	0	1	1.61	2.45
		Party Total	21	0	2	7.08	12.11
	Rashtriya Lok Dal	Uttar Pradesh	3	0	0	0.99	1.69
		Party Total	3	0	0	0.99	1.69
31	Revolutionary Socialist Party	Kerala	1	1	0	1.91	2.46
		West Bengal	4	0	4	0.3	0.37
		Party Total	5	1	4	0.74	0.92
32	Shiromani Akali Dal	Punjab	10	2	0	18.09	27.76
		Party Total	10	2	0	18.09	27.76
33	Sikkim Democratic Front	Sikkim	1	0	0	35.59	44.21
		Party Total	1	0	0	35.59	44.21
34	Shivsena	Maharashtra	23	18	0	14.2	23.5
		Party Total	23	18	0	14.2	23.5
35	Sikkim Krantikari Morcha	Sikkim	1	1	0	38.45	47.76
		Party Total	1	1	0	38.45	47.76
36	Samajwadi Party	Uttar Pradesh	37	5	1	10.63	18.11
		Party Total	37	5	1	10.63	18.11
37	Telugu Desam	Andhra Pradesh	25	3	0	31.76	40.19
		Party Total	25	3	0	31.76	40.19
38	Telangana Rashtra Samithi	Telangana	17	9	1	25.91	41.71
		Party Total	17	9	1	25.91	41.71
39	United Democratic Party	Meghalaya	1	0	0	13.96	19.7
		Party Total	1	0	0	13.96	19.7
40	Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party	Andhra Pradesh	25	22	0	39.43	49.89
		Party Total	25	22	0	39.43	49.89
41	Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party	Nagaland	1	1	0	41.24	49.84
		Party Total	1	1	0	41.24	49.84
	Grand Total		345	135	50	13.69	0

Source: CEC, Government of India, 2019

4.3 Leadership Traits for the Sustenance of Regional Political Parties

The emergence of Regional Political Parties into existence has created stiff competition at the state level. The parties which have emerged with their own unique agenda have been concentrated on the able leadership of the leaders. The leadership traits possessed by the leader of leaders focused on various dimensions as per the needs and wants of the people and demands of the party cadre.

An attempt is made to understand the leadership traits of leaders of select regional political parties. Three select regional parties have been considered from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana state with a view to reviewing the traits of leaders. The opinion polling method is applied to understand the traits of the leaders through consultation of select party representatives at a higher level, medium and lower level. A Structured questionnaire is used to solicit the responses on what leadership traits impress them at the state level. On the basis of consolidation of survey results, mean values are obtained and based on the ranking of mean scores, the following 13 traits were observed to be more frequently approached leadership traits of the leader of leaders. The evaluation of leadership traits of various regional political parties resulted in the following traits.

a) Integrity

The effective leadership qualities are witnessed according to the commitment of the leader to integrate all the party leaders into one agenda. The able leadership will make him integrate the party cadre, people and encourage the integrity approach for ensuring reachability to all sections of the state.

b) Delegating Ability

The able leader will not keep all his powers centralized in him. The effective leadership trait will be observed based on the delegation of responsibilities and powers to its party leaders. The leader of leaders needs the coordination ability while delegating the responsibilities to its party leaders.

c) Communication

One of the powerful weapons for being a leader is to have good communication skills. The communication abilities with its party cadre, communication to the people in public meetings will highlight the leadership ability. The command and slang used in the local language will make him be reached more to the public.

d) Self Awareness

An effective leader should have command over what is happening in the state and what factors influencing the state political environment. The awareness over a geographic region of the state, command over various subjects, spontaneous speech capabilities will be achieved through good self-awareness.

e) Gratitude

The gratitude towards people, party cadre is very vital to reach more into the people acceptance. The gratitude of a leader should reflect on what kind of decisions he takes in favour of people who have made him become a leader.

f) Learning ability

The leader should be a continuous learner. The knowledge in different areas will make him be an effective leader and the acquisition of knowledge will make him behave with more maturity and take better decisions.

g) Influence

The leader should have the ability to influence the people and motivates them in favour of their party. The leader of a leader should influence his party leaders through effective motivational skills.

h) Respect

The kind of respect the leader gives to his party cadre and public needs will make to become a better leader.

i) Responsibility

The success or failure to be accepted and the leader should take responsibility for the progress of the party to effectively influence the growth of the party

j) Vision

The leader should have broader visions about his future and as well as the party's future. He should set the mission, and work on the objectives to achieve the vision.

k) Positivity

The leader of leaders should be positive in his decision making and should not be biased with influence from specific sections.

l) Accountability

The leader should take accountability for implementing the promises made for the people and the state.

m) Stay simple

An effective leader should be simple in his approach. The simple approach will make the people freely express their needs to the leaders and the leaders can easily get connected to the people and party cadre.

5 Conclusion

This study explains the emergence of regional political parties, the progress of parties and what leadership traits are influencing the present regional political parties. The study reveals that ever since the first regional political party has stemmed in the Indian Political environment, there has been a constant increase in the existence of regional parties and at present in each of the 28 states represent a strong existence of regional political parties. The study on the opinion polling approach resulted in 13 leadership traits that were been commonly observed in select regional political parties. The study on the growth of regional parties shows that regionalism, the desire for regional development, regional demands have influenced the parties and altogether these necessities have directed the growth of regional parties. The statistical results show that the regional parties have able to increase their presence in both houses of parliament through possessing leadership traits that have influenced public support in the form of rising voting share.

6 Availability of Data And Material

Statistical data is obtained from Reports of Election Commission of India, New Delhi, available from <http://eci.gov.in>

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