

Chapter I

Introduction

Research Problem

A party system is comprised of numerous political parties that share an intricate relationship among themselves and they coexist and compete with each other over power sharing. Political parties are an indispensable part of the party system as well as that of a representative democracy like India. Indian party system is unique in its own way and has always remained vibrant and has maintained its buoyancy. The vast menu of choices (in terms of political leaders/ parties) makes it flexible in nature. The fragmented nature of the voting pattern of the Indian electorates made it inconsistent in nature. The status of the Indian National Congress in the Indian party system has often been exaggerated as is evident from the seminal work of Rajni Kothari (1964) entitled "*The Congress system in India*" where he has described the Indian party system as the 'Congress System'. However, it is very well discernible that even during the era of undisputed rule of INC at the national level few of the state's opted for non-Congress alternatives such as Kerala, Nagaland, Jammu and Kashmir¹. Hence the party system of a single country stands fragmented in nature, getting bifurcated into national and state level party systems ever since the predominant Congress era when Congress was the ruling party for more than a decade in most of the states and at the national level.

Each state has its own distinct party system. Hence it can be stated that Indian party system was never uniform in nature and infact became more fragmented in nature with each election. This trend is visible since 1957 and more particularly since 1967. Hence an attempt has been made through this work to sketch the pattern of fragmentation of the Indian party system through electoral verdicts. The work will also see how the states have voted for different political hues with each assembly

¹In Jammu and Kashmir it was the National Conference which was the ruling party in 1962. In Kerala, too, the CPI-led government had come to power during the era of Congress dominance during 1957-1959. With the 1960 assembly election in Kerala, 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 during a predominant Congress era headed by Naga National Organization with its first assembly election after it became an independent state in 1963.

elections. We notice that various factors had been in play to make the party system bifurcated into two levels. Hence through this work an attempt has been made to identify some of the (most significant) factors by studying some of the selected state party systems that have facilitated the bifurcation of the Indian party system into two levels. My work will also sketch the role of newly formed political parties or political novices as they have made a significant impact upon the Indian party system at both the levels by splintering or accumulating votes as well as by facilitating realignment and reconfiguration of the Indian party system. Party system not only reflects conflicts, cleavages, ethnic demands and rifts, regional demands, etc. it strongly reflects the ‘aspirations’ of the masses as well. Electoral verdicts show that party system also manifests people expectations (from the party/coalition in power) and desire to develop in all walks of life. Hence through the work attempts have been made to study the recent elections (general as well selected state assembly polls) of 2004, 2009 and 2014 to see how ‘aspirations’ of the Indian masses guided their electoral logic. Therefore, through the work we will study to what extent parameters like popularity, positivity, performance and populism have been adopted and employed by political leaders and parties which in turn made an impact upon the trajectory of the Indian party system at both the levels of the Indian party system. Hence, in order to seek answers to these research problems some question become pertinent. In this work we have made an attempt to seek answers to certain questions.

Research Questions

The specific questions which we have raised and answered in the thesis are as follows:

1. What are the central features of the Indian party system since 1989?
2. What are the various causes that have contributed to the changes in the nature of the Indian Party System in the recent period? How have the decline of the Indian National Congress, the growth of the BJP and the expansion of the Regional parties bring transformation in the Indian Party system?
3. What are the central features of some of the selected state party systems that have evolved since 1989? What are the factors that have contributed to the growth of the various state party systems in different regions of the country?

4. Is there any similarity between the state party systems and the National party system? If not what are the factors that have contributed towards the bifurcation of the party system between the national and state level?
5. What changes are likely to take place in the Indian Party System and the state party systems in the near future?

Objective of the Study

There are several objectives of the study. The central objective is to study the Indian party system since 1989 and to identify its features. Besides the central objective the work also enlists the political developments that led to the changes in the Indian party system at the national level. Attempts have been made to trace the pattern of fragmentation of the Indian party system through the aid of electoral data and enumerate some of the selected reasons for the fragmentation of the Indian party system into two levels- the national and the state level. We also look at some of the selected distinct state party systems that had evolved in the several regions of the country. The work also enumerates some of the most immediate factors that have led to the bifurcation of the Indian party system between the national level and state level for few of the selected state party systems. The study also analyses the features of the studied selected state party systems. We have made an attempt to study how the parameters like popularity, populism, positivity and performance have dominated the course of the 2004, 2009, 2014 general elections and the subsequent state assembly elections of the studied selected state party systems.

Review of Literature

Any work which is related to the Congress and the party system in India must begin with a reference to the celebrated work of Rajni Kothari (1964) entitled "The Congress system in India". Through the article he has tried to show that India largely had a system which can be characterized as one-party dominant system where the Indian National Congress (INC) or the Congress party had enjoyed undisputed hegemony. The Congress party has assumed the role of a "party of consensus" and gave enough room to the 'parties of pressure' that had existed as independent force.

Other forces too existed but had played rather insignificant roles. To Kothari, mediated politics by the Congress party had prevented other parties from gaining in strength and this had enabled the party to emerge as the dominant force during the post- independence period. However, it has been stated in this article that the party has ruled due to the consensus that prevailed among the people. It had been in power due to the popular verdict of the people in favour of the party and not through the indiscriminate use of power or force. But he has failed to provide an evaluative account of the performance of all the Congress ruled governments that existed since 1952 till 1964. It is mainly descriptive (describes the nature of the party system) and analytical (points out why the Congress party was able to maintain its hegemony) in nature and not evaluative in its approach. However, considering the fact that Congress was in power since the first general election both at the centre and in most of the states, the author has therefore sought to define the system as the congress system. However, despite the significance of the article in the study of Indian politics and party system the author could not predict the breakdown of the 'Congress system'.

Rajni Kothari (1974) in the article, “The Congress System Revisited: A Decennial Review” has reviewed the meaning of the congress system and its various features. In the article Kothari has described the model as the model of historical experience, a model of relationship between politics and society and a model of legitimizing the political system and its values. He has tried to sketch the change and continuity of the ‘congress system’ based on some eight criterion (see p. 1038).

Kothari has also tried to analyze the present status (continuity and change) of the congress system and has argued that despite of the 1967 debacle the congress system on the whole has remained intact. According to him, some significant developments had taken place in the system such as change in the composition of the congress as a party, many new elements or competitors has entered the system but despite of it the system has maintained some amount of continuity. He also argued that the congress system has on the whole served India well (p. 1040). He has asserted that the operative mechanism of the system of one- party dominance has not undergone any changes based on the analyses of electoral and factional trends since 1967. To Kothari the congress system maintains its dominance on the basis of legitimate authority. However, Kothari has predicted that when at the national level there will be emergence of one or more other parties of consensus besides the congress party then

only the congress system will slip into a state of decline.

In this article he had advised to take note of the growing consciousness of the electorate which might become a significant reason for the reconfiguration in the position of the congress system. The issue of legitimacy of the congress system may suffer a setback if it fails to deliver or perform. Similar idea has been conveyed by Ashish Nandy as well. According to Ashish Nandy a ruling system loses its legitimacy because of stagnation and deterioration in the living condition of the masses. When the system which is in power fail to deliver or perform then only it loses its legitimacy to rule. Towards the end of his discussion he has offered some ways which to him the Congress should adopt and apply to plug its loophole so that it can maintain its position as the ruling party. To conclude he has not ruled out the possibility of a change in the system because to him the model has the capacity to adapt itself and respond to the changing conditions.

However, this article appears as a defence of his former article “The Congress System in India” (1964) which was sort of celebratory epilogue of the Congress system. However the article is helpful since it provides some useful insights and prediction regarding the future of the Indian party system. This article can be considered as more analytical in nature in comparison to his former work ‘Congress System in India’ (1964).

Myron Weiner’s (1971) article “The 1971 Elections and the Indian Party System” is primarily concerned with the 1971 elections in India. The 1971 general election was a very important election from the context that it has established Congress (R) as the real Congress party and has relegated Congress led by the syndicate as the opposition party. Therefore, Weiner (1971) through this article has endeavoured to discuss the 1971 election and the impact of the results of this election on the Indian party system. To him the 1971 general election was a challenge for Mrs. Gandhi to establish Congress (R) as the real Congress party. According to Weiner, Mrs. Gandhi had to fight back various hurdles such as there was no national mass media; she also lacked a party organization in every constituency, as well as had no single dramatic national issue. However, despite of these contingencies Weiner feels that it is the opposition parties that have contributed to Mrs. Gandhi’s victory by singling out Mrs. Gandhi as their prime target rather than offering any national leader as an alternative.

The author in his article has not failed to bring into notice one of the most significant feature of this election which is the rise in vote share of the regional parties and of independents. In the 1971 election in eight of the eighteen states the first or second largest party, in terms of popular vote, was a regional party. A section of the article also contains discussion on regional parties, their rise and fall along with a discussion on the consequences of 1971 parliamentary election. Hence it happens to be an important contribution to the available literature on the Indian Party System.

The article 'The Crisis of Indian Party System' by A. G. Noorani (1980)___mainly discusses about the various break- away groups and factions that have acted as opposition parties and have aspired to take the control of the mantle of power thereby replacing the Congress party. This development, to Noorani, has subsequently made the Indian party system face numerous crises both at the national and state level. Through this article the author had tried to offer a very clear picture of the Indian politics since 1948 when the Congress Socialist Party was formed and existed as a break- away group from the Indian National Congress. The author has done a very meticulous job. Although the author has talked about polarization at both the level but had not suggested any corrective measures to arrest these crises which had actually made the Indian party system volatile and fluctuating. The article is poor in terms of citation and references. The author for compiling this article has drawn heavily from secondary resources but at the same time is a replica of the then contemporary events or developments in the Indian party system.

Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph (1987) in their book "In the pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State" have tried to point in the chapter entitled 'Decline of Congress dominance and the emergence of a Bifurcated Party System' that the dominance of the Congress party had diminished with the 1984 election because the party was ousted from power in most of the states and a new party system was thus born. They have in fact tried to show that the return of the Congress back to power after the downfall of 1977 was not comprehensive because it had suffered a breakdown in its support base in Uttar Pradesh, the heartland of India and the disadvantaged minorities had also deserted the Congress at large. They had also pointed towards the bifurcation of the party system between the national and the state level and have hinted towards the growth of a coalition and alliance politics.

However they have failed to classify the nature and the type of the new party system that has according to them developed since the 1980s.

Anindya Saha (1999) in the article “The Indian Party System 1989-1999” has mainly discussed about the transformation, reconfiguration and realignment in the Indian party system both at the national and state level till 1989. Following these he has tried to analyze the causes that has led to these series of transformation of the once Congress dominated Indian party system. He is of the opinion that electoral law, the principle of federalism and politics based on social cleavage has led to the bifurcation of the Indian party system. However, apart from these reasons growing mass consciousness, lack of established political cultural, departure of Congress party from consensual politics and regionalization of party politics, etc. can also be considered as some of the other important reasons for the reconfiguration of the Indian party system. In fact with the passage of each successive year if observed carefully, then it is the performance of the ruling government or government delivering on the line of social justice and equity are having better chance of survival. However, the author has not explored this reason in detail.

The author has not used any primary resources. The work is mainly based on secondary resources. The footnotes do not provide much extended information. They contain mainly names of references. Despite of it the work can be considered as an important contribution to the existing works on Indian party system.

The article “Fragmentation of the Indian party system” by E. Sridharan (2002) has dealt with the phenomenon of the fragmentation of the Indian party system. To explain the fragmentation of the party system he has grouped the entire process into various phase beginning from 1952 till 1967 when the Congress enjoyed the hegemonic position which later on suffered electoral reverses in as many as nine states. The shifts in the party system has been verified and analyzed by the author in terms of shifts in vote share and seats share. He had also discussed about the process of bipolarization of the state party system and has offered seven explanation or reasons for the fragmentation of the party system. Sridharan has earmarked early 1967 as the period from when the fragmentation of the party system started followed by a discussion on the evolution of the trend of alliances in the party system both at the national and state level. However, we beg to disagree with the author’s view that evolution of alliances has led to lesser poles. In fact, the party system in both the

level, national and state has become much more polarized in recent times. The work is weak in terms of footnotes. The footnotes do not clarify any idea or terms neither are they in the form of some extended points. The footnotes are just name of sources for further references. The work is weak in terms of citation as well.

Balveer Arora (2002) in his article “Political Parties and the Party System: The Emergence of New Coalitions” has strongly argued that regional and state based parties had actually led to significant changes in the Indian party system. One of the major reasons for fragmentation of the party system has been the growth of state specific interests and aspirations. Growth of alliances and coalition politics has enabled these parties to have a greater share in the task of governance. Arora through his article has tried to uphold the increasing influence and rise of the state- based and regional parties in the Indian party system. The parties are anti-Congress in nature and have grown at the expense of the Congress party. He has also provided an account of the various stages of the growth and transition of the Indian party system. The author has been able to apprehend well that in the near future the state- based parties will continue to stay and influence the functions of the political system.

Peter Mair (2002) in his article “Comparing Party System” has reviewed all the principal approaches applied for classification of party systems. He has endeavoured to review the existing typologies of Duverger, Dahl, Blondel, Rokkan and Sartori. Of the existing typologies Mair has accorded priority to the classification provided by Sartori. He has used classification based on number of parties and ideological distance to typify the party system. Followed by this Peter Mair has discussed about the structure of competition that exists in any given party systems. However, Mair has claimed that electoral change is not the cause but the consequence for party system change. However, this proposition of the author can be applied to the Indian context so as to examine and analyse the reasons for such drastic changes in the Indian Party System.

James Manor (2002) in his article ‘Parties and the System’ has tried to provide a valuable insight into the Indian party system and have tried to study it by categorizing into various phases starting from 1947 to 1967 when the congress party had enjoyed considerable dominance in the Indian party system. To him changes in the political parties have bearing upon the changes or transition in the Indian party system. The second phase was demarcated from 1967 to 1977 when Congress for the first time

faced decline in its state of dominance and was ultimately defeated in the 1977 election when the Janata party came to power. The third phase was demarcated from 1984 onwards. He was of the opinion that factors like defection, increase in mass consciousness and the need for development as well as the performance by the ruling government all have an impact upon the Indian party system and often leads to truncated verdict from the masses which further leads to the changes in the party system.

Zoya Hasan (2002) in her article “Conflict, Pluralism and the Competitive Party System in India” has similarly tried to categorize the different phases of the party system along with providing reasons for the decline of one party dominance of the congress party. She has also held that the rise of the BJP has led to the reconfiguration of the party system. The article also contains discussion on the growth of the two party systems at the state level. She has even referred to about the growth of the alliances and coalition politics in Indian Politics.

Balveer Arora (2003) in his article “Federalization of India’s party system” mainly tries to argue that emergence of a single or multi state parties at the national level as coalition parties has enabled these parties to represent their issues at the national level. This had led to the elevation in their stature. Federalization has led to the termination of monopoly that the national level parties had always enjoyed at the central level. For convenience Arora has taken up federalization as an analytical concept to explain the ‘changes’ that the party system has undergone since the post Congress dominated era. This article concentrates on the Indian party system which to Arora has undergone far reaching changes. He has also tried to look at the various dimensions and contours of the party system. According to Arora the party system has become binodal in nature since the 1990s.

The term fragmentation is certainly suitable to describe India’s party system because the delinking of the national level and state level election has led to the fragmentation of the party system. However, there is no continuity in the nature of the party system at the national level as well. Neither does all the state possess a uniform type of a party system. In fact, it can be stated that federalization has led to the fragmentation of the Indian party system.

He also points out that state based parties (single or multi-state) have gradually

represented and influenced politics at the national level apart from producing full term majorities at the state level in most cases. This characteristic further highlights the federal nature of the party system. Besides, according to Arora growing mass consciousness and federal structures and institutions has also contributed towards the federal nature of the party system. In short the author has conglomerated under one roof various causes which is leading towards federalization of the party system. However, he has not provided any opinion as to whether this trend, i.e., of federalization of the party system would in the near future jeopardize the smooth functioning of the political process.

In the article, “Do party system count? The number of parties and Government Performance in the Indian states” (2004) Pradeep Chibber and Irfan Nooruddin has argued that difference in party systems across the states leads to variations in government performance or delivery of public services across the states in India. In their opinion, political parties engaged in two- party competitions are likely to deliver more public goods than those who have to make decisions in the context of a multi-party environment. According to Chibber and Noruddin, it is so because in multi-party system parties have to mobilize particular segments of the population and they do not have to reach social groups to the same degree as political parties in a two-party system does (pg.9). In a multi-party system parties have to focus on their voting blocs as any loss of support from this group could lead to defeat. Hence parties in multi-party systems provide state resources directly to targeted groups.

Hence, in the opinion of the authors, in multi-party system parties mainly provide club goods whereas in two party system parties focus more on providing public goods as they have to cater to a large segment of the citizens. Thus, it appears that the authors are of the opinion that people under two-party system get enhanced public services than people in multi –party system. However, considering the situation where the competition for power has accentuated to such a great extent, a two- party system has become a rare possibility. Hence, this makes the findings in the paper debatable and impractical.

Prakash Sarangi (2005) is also of the opinion that the Indian party system has undergone several transformations since independence. His article “Economic Reform and Changes in the Indian Party System” has tried to show that economic development and economic reforms have a direct bearing on the nature of the party

system. He has also held that these two factors even influence the voting behaviour of the masses. Regionalism too has been the outcome of it and has led to the fragmentation of the party system. Through this article he has also tried to discuss the various phases of the party system since independence commencing from 1952 till 1967 as the period of one party system. He has categorized the second phase from 1967 to 1989 and has dubbed it as the period of polarized pluralism and the third phase, i.e. from 1989 onwards as the period of segmented pluralism. The article tends to draw too heavily from secondary resources. The author has not made any effort to provide any new conceptualization despite of the fact that the topic he has chosen to write upon is contemporary in nature. The author could have easily attempted to interpret and conceptualize the terms like fragmentation, polarized pluralism, segmented pluralism or federalization, etc. in his own way as this would have enabled the author to offer his reader with something 'new'. However what the author offers, as it appears, is a compiled note on change in the party system because of economic reforms process since the 1990s.

Zoya Hasan (2007) in her article "Congress after Indira Gandhi: Decline or Revival?" has hinted towards the signs of revival by the Congress party as a revitalized force since the 2004 Lok Sabha election partly due to some drawbacks of the BJP led NDA government and also due to the incorporation of the democratic agenda in the course of action and in its election manifestoes. The shift in ideological positions, organizational refurbishment had also contributed to the revival of the Congress party as has been pointed out by Hasan. The discussion however does not try to see the changes, reconfiguration and realignment in the Indian party system due to the revival of the Indian National Congress from its state of decline.

Zoya Hasan (2011) in her article "Political Parties" has discussed the role of political parties in democratic consolidation and its success although she has not missed the opportunity to discuss the demerits of party politics as well. Hasan has also discussed about the various transformation and reconfiguration that the political system has witnessed due to the rise and fall of INC and growth of new opposition parties as well the Bharatiya Janata Party. However, the author through the article has also tried to show how the rise of regional parties has led to the fragmentation of the party system.

However, one of the significant developments in the political system has been the consolidation of coalitional politics which has now become the order of the day. This

in turn has made Indian parties much more pragmatic than ideological, which according to the author has made party boundaries more flexible than permeable. In other words, ideology has been replaced by pragmatism to a large extent. Hence, according to the author, both national and state level parties have become pragmatic to gain a share of political power. In a word, Hasan has tried to show how political parties are causing changes in the party system.

The article has also discussed about one of the serious problems confronting the Indian political parties which are lack of internal democracy within the party structure. Hasan has also enlisted some other serious problems as well which ranged from nexus between politics and corporate sector, failure on the part of the political parties in power to keep electoral promises or reduce social inequalities. Parties that exist primarily for interest articulation and interest aggregation of the nation are now seen mostly engaged in wooing the demands of the big business houses. The article is very relevant and useful in understanding present day party politics. The article aptly traces the contemporary scenario and trends of modern day party politics and hence is an important contribution to the literature on Indian politics.

E. Sridharan (2011) in his article “The party system” has discussed the process of fragmentation of the Indian party system since the 1952 first general election. Through the article the author has also provided an overview of the party system and has focused on the electoral trajectory of the political parties and their evolution in the party system. Besides, the author has also provided several explanations to explain the process of fragmentation of the Indian party system. E. Sridharan has also discussed about various alliances and coalitions that has emerged to challenge the hitherto hegemonic position of the Congress party in the Indian party system. In this article he has categorized the party system into various phases.

This article is analogous to E. Sridharan’s former article, ‘The fragmentation of the Indian Party System’ published in 2002 in Zoya Hasan edited “Parties and Party Politics in India”. However, in this article he has provided an extended discussion on the pattern of fragmentation of the Indian Party System till 2009. In his earlier article he had discussed the pattern of fragmentation only till 1999.

In the article “The new party system: Federalized and Binodal” Balveer Arora and K.K. Kailash (2012) has tried to show how Indian Party system has become binodal

structurally with Congress and BJP at two opposite poles. According to them, emergence of coalitional politics has made party system federalized in nature with the increase in trends among the single-state and multi-state parties becoming coalitional partners at the centre. However, with the onset of the trend of regionalization more particularly since the 1980s the party system had become federalized in nature, only that it had become more pronounced in recent times. The authors have defined the present party system as a new form of competitive multi-party system. In the article the authors have tried to describe the present nature of the Indian Party System. However, with the rise of various “fronts” in recent times in the Indian Party System the structure no more remains only binodal in nature. Hence, the Indian Party System cannot be aptly described as binodal in nature although its federalized character has become more pronounced in recent times. The recent work by Rekha Diwakar (2017) entitled ‘Party System in India’ is interesting and provides an analysis of the Indian party system through its various phases-from a congress party dominated system to a BJP centred party system.

Party system is an indispensable component of Indian politics and has always attracted scholarly attention. It has also attracted scholarly attention because of the dramatic changes that it has witnessed since independence. It has produced surprising results with its vast menu of choices. It has facilitated realignment in power structure and the basic dynamics of the society. Various scholars have time and again attempted to study the changes that the Indian party system has undergone and have offered various reasons to explain the changes. The Indian party system had always undergone sea changes and these add to quite a messy picture of the Indian party system. The Indian party system is said to have moved from a one -party dominated system to a multi- party system, from cohesion to coalitions.

The literature reviewed demonstrates how numerous developments in the system had led to the downfall of the Congress system. The writings of Arora, Sridharan, Zoya Hasan, Rudolph & Rudolph etc. deal with the breakdown of the Congress system and the subsequent realignments and changes in the nature of the Indian party system. However, despite of the literature available its volatile nature since independence keeps it on the focus. It is because of this my interest in this study has grown. Hence we will make a naive attempt to study the Indian party system by emphasizing more on the changing nature of the Indian party system since 1989 on which there are few

studies. Besides, my work will make an effort to analyse the role and impact of the small parties on the Indian party system. Apart from it my work will try to study whether formation of regional and local parties have led to availability of more choices at the disposal of the voters and whether this leads to fractured verdict and facilitates realignments and fragmentation of the Indian party system.

Beside these, the work will also study the 2004 and 2009 general election and the subsequent assembly polls and try to analyze and figure out their effects on the nature or the structure of the party system as well as categorize the recent features of the Indian party system. With the next 16th Lok Sabha election knocking at the door my study will also make an attempt to see the consequences and the changes that might take place with the 16th general elections on the Indian party system. However, the work will look at both the national and state level party systems. The work will also see how in present times not just cleavages, identity and conflicts determine the course of Indian party system. Rather parameters like *Popularity and Populism*, *Performance and Positivism* tend to impact the course of the Indian party system at both the national and state level. Hence by studying the general and the state election efforts have been made to see how these parameters are employed to fight election and how they tend to cast an effect on the electoral verdicts.

Data and Research Methodology

Both primary and secondary materials have been used to complete the work. Primary materials include election manifestoes, pamphlets and other documents such as resolutions, Press briefings and releases, reports, monthly journals published by the various political parties, books and monographs of various political parties. In addition to it, information from the website of various political parties has been used as well. Hence, the websites of various political parties such as www.aicc.org.in, www.bjp.org, www.dmk.in, www.cpimwb.org.in, www.aiadmcallindia.org, www.aitmc.org, etc. has been referred to compile this work. Besides websites of various state governments such as <http://www.kerala.gov.in>, <http://www.kerala.state.org>, <http://up.gov.in>, <http://www.cm.uk.gov.in>, etc. and state assemblies <http://www.vidhansabha.bih.nic.in>, <http://www.wbassembly.gov.in>, [14 | Page](http://www.assama</p></div><div data-bbox=)

ssembly.gov.in/ala-since-1937.html, <http://www.niyamasabha.org>, etc. has been used to extract information mainly quantitative in nature for writing this work. Election results have also been used for this work which has been drawn from the website of the Election Commission (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Besides, observation can also be used as a method to collect the data which will include holistic description of events and behaviour.

The work also required extensive use of secondary resources. Secondary resources that have been used to study the topic included books, journals, magazines. Information and data collected from various newspapers such as The Hindu, The Statesman, The Telegraph, Times of India, Hindustan Times, Economic Times, The Indian Express, Business Standard, etc. has been used along with vernacular newspapers. Internet has been used as a mode of extracting relevant data for conducting the study and therefore sites like www.google.com and www.jstor.org has been referred to get access to innumerable referred journals such as Economic and Political Weekly, Mainstream, Seminar, Asian Survey, Asian Affairs, The Journal of Asian Studies, Modern Asian Studies, Far Eastern Survey, Pacific Affairs, Comparative Political Studies, etc. The data thus collected has been analyzed and interpreted for which the content analysis of the various materials has been made.

Chapters:

The study has been arranged in the following chapters:

- Chapter I : INTRODUCTION- Statement of problem, Research Questions, Review of Literature, Objective of the Study, Data and Methodology. The primary materials used in the study are of various kinds and they can be divided into two parts mainly:
- i) Documentary sources of various kinds have been used mainly party briefings, party literature and manifestos collected from the party offices and internet.
 - ii) The second source of primary material that has been used is the official statistics from the Election commission website and other state agencies. The data collected from the election commission website is

mainly quantitative and they have been analysed and used in the study. Information from State Government websites and State Assembly websites were also collected and has been used in the study.

The methodology applied to analyse the data is basically content analysis. Graphs have been used to represent the data using official statistics from the website of election commission and Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation website.

Chapter II : The Evolution of the Indian Party System and the Indian Party System since 1989.

The chapter tries to see how the rising dissidence among the colonized Indian population since the early 19th century led to birth of a party system in India. As well as by using classical definition of Giovanni Sartori and Maurice Duverger attempt has been made to show how the Indian party system was never a Congress pre-dominated system rather the Congress party was just a majority party in the competitive multi-party system. The chapter discusses the reasons for the decline of the popularity of the Indian National Congress since the late 1960s till the late 1980s. Moreover, through the chapter attempt has been made to classify the nature of the national party system since the first general election till 1989 general election.

Chapter III : The Fragmentation of the Party System in India since 1957.

The Chapter has made an attempt to sketch the pattern of fragmentation of the Indian party system through electoral verdicts. Besides, the chapter also discusses some of the prominent reasons for the bifurcation and fragmentation of the Indian party system into two levels, namely, national and state. Besides, the chapter also enlists some of the prominent recent features of the Indian party system as well as some of the significant reasons for the demise of the Congress (I) since

1984 that further aggravated the trend of fragmentation of the Indian party system.

Chapter IV&V : Emergence of Multiple Fragments: A study of the Selected State Party Systems.

Both the chapters study some of the significant state party systems. These chapters also discuss various factors that led to bifurcation of the Indian party system and rise of distinct state party systems. The chapters also enlist the features of these state party systems and the role of the political novices in realigning and reconfiguring the state party systems.

Chapter VI : General Elections (2004-2014) and the Indian Party System: Popularity and Populism, Performance and Positivism.

The Chapter focuses on how parameters like populism, performance, popularity and positivity have directed the course of the lok sabha elections of 2004, 2009 and 2014. This chapter has made an attempt to see how through devising populist policies political parties contesting elections promises to satisfy the pangs of hunger for comprehensive development and through vigorous election campaign by a popular leader raises people's hopes and aspirations to achieve development for an developing nation. However, survival and continuity of a popularly elected government depends on the symmetry between 'proclamations' and 'performance'.

Chapter VII : Conclusion.

The chapter summarizes the discussion on the topic. Circulation of new political elites and with diminishing returns from Congress as a party and as a government, scattered voting pattern of the Indian electorates, lack of any strong allegiance to any particular political party, the rising aspirations of the common masses for a better tomorrow, etc. were some of the reasons that led to fragmentation of the Indian party system. The trend of fragmentation led to rise in emergence of multiple

fragments. The state party system portrayed numerous features which were distinct from the other. Although initially numerous factors such as cleavage, identity, regionalism, conflicts over political opportunities, etc led to changes in the Indian party system and kept it fragmented in nature but with passing years factors like populism, performance, popularity and positivity tend to impact electoral logic of the Indian masses. The study of the 2004, 2009 and 2014 general and state elections done amply testify to this claim. It can be fairly concluded that symmetry between rhetoric and action can ensure continuity and survival of a ruling government.