

Emerging patterns of leadership in contemporary India with reference to Gujarat & Maharashtra

Y.M.Sumant

Dept. of Politics and Public Admn.

yashwant@unipune.ernet.in, yashwantsumant06@yahoo.com

Regionalization of Politics has been one of the defining features of post-1980 Indian politics. With the erosion of the 'Congress System' the regions in India have emerge as dominant political actors shaping and conditioning the patterns of Leadership both at the national as well as the regional level. The growth of several regional parties and the dominance of the regional political leaders in determining the nature of coalition politics in contemporary India not only testify to this but also indicate a paradigm shift in the pattern of leadership.

The contemporary regional leadership in many of the states has considerably undermined the notion of national leadership. Many of the potential national leaders prefer to identify themselves primarily as a regional actor with a view to acquiring more bargaining power at the national level. They have been quite successful in politically encashing and interpreting / defining the region in terms of caste, regional identity and politics of development. Their ability to build up the political support on the basis of a peculiar combination of controlling the local institution structures with that of the appropriate caste mobilization, finely coached into a development rhetoric has helped them strengthening their regional roots and expanding their bargaining space at the national level in the name of regional development and regional pride. Regional parties, of course do exist but they thrive more on the personal charisma of these regional leaders rather than getting well entrenched institutionally in a given society. This quite evident from the pattern of contemporary regional leadership as exemplified by Sharad Pawar in Maharashtra, Narendra Modi in Gujarat, Jaylalitaji in Tamilnadu, Chandrababu Naidu in Andra Pradesh or Lalu Prasad and Mulayamsing Yadav in Bihar and U.P. respectively.

The present study therefore aims to focus on understanding the local and regional political processes that help sustaining this emerging pattern of leadership in India which thrives more on encashing the region politically then directly claiming and occupying the national space. To begin with the present project seeks to explain this pattern with reference to the political leadership of Mr. Narendra Modi in Gujrat and Mr. Sharad Pawar in Maharashtra.