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Abstract: *The aim of this research paper is to critically examine the change and continuity happen in Indian politics since 1947. Following descriptive and analytical method, this research paper followed secondary sources following research articles, journals, books and other evidences. This paper finds place in investigating the early dominance of political parties like Congress and few and gradually declined by the influence of time, internal clashes and standing of other political parties in states and at the centre. Having reference to political parties that aroused by the time and changes they brought to Indian politics, there are series of evidences discussed. It shows that social factors like caste and religion still influence politics. The paper argues that India has changed in leadership and policies but maintained stability in its political system. Overall, Indian democracy remains strong yet faces challenges like inequality, governance issues, and identity politics, showing both progress and limits together. This balance between change and continuity helps the system adapt over time while preserving democratic values and institutional strength in India today.*

Key Words: Indian politics, Continuity, Changes, Coalition government, Shift in power.

Introduction:

After 1947, Indian politics started with the task of nation building under very difficult conditions like partition, poverty, and social divisions. In the early years, one party system was dominant, mainly led by Jawaharlal Nehru, where focus was on democracy, secularism, and planned development. Over time, Indian politics changed with the rise of regional parties, coalition governments, and stronger role of voters. Scholars like Rajni Kothari (1964) explained this phase as a “Congress system,” where one party remained central but opposition also existed. Later studies, such as by Yogendra Yadav (1999), show how Indian politics moved towards multi-party competition and more participation from different social groups. This shows that Indian politics has changed a lot, but at the same time it has also kept some basic features stable.

The idea of “change” in Indian politics means shifts in power, rise of new parties, new issues like development and identity politics, and increasing role of media and technology. At the same time, “continuity” means those features which have remained stable, like regular elections, importance of the Constitution, and democratic system. As Granville Austin (1966) explained, the Indian Constitution created a strong base which has continued even during political changes. Even when governments changed, the system of elections, parliament, and judiciary remained active. So, Indian politics is not only about change, but also about continuity of democratic values and institutions.

Studying political development in India is important because it helps us understand how democracy works in a large and diverse country. India has many differences of caste, religion, language, and region, but still it continues as a democratic system. Scholars like Atul Kohli (2001) have shown that political development in India is linked with state capacity and social structure. By studying change and continuity, we can understand both progress and problems in Indian politics, like inequality, representation, and governance issues.

This study is also important because it connects past and present political conditions. It helps to understand why some problems like caste politics or regional inequality still continue, and how new changes like youth participation and digital politics are shaping the system. Therefore, a critical study of change and continuity in Indian politics since 1947 gives a balanced understanding of both stability and transformation in the Indian political system.

Objectives of the Study

- To study major changes in Indian politics since 1947
- To identify elements of continuity
- To analyse the overall development of Indian political system

Research Methodology:

This study is based on descriptive and analytical research method. It mainly uses secondary data, which is collected from books, research articles, government reports, and published journals related to Indian

politics. The descriptive method is used to explain the development of Indian politics since 1947, while the analytical method is used to understand the pattern of change and continuity in the political system.

Changes in Indian Politics:

One major change in Indian politics since 1947 is the decline of one-party dominance and rise of many political parties. In the early years, the Indian National Congress was very strong and ruled at the centre and in most states. As explained by Rajni Kothari (1964), this was called the Congress system. But after 1967, many states started electing non-Congress governments. Later, new parties like Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in Tamil Nadu, Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh, and Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh came forward. These parties represented regional and social groups like backward classes and Dalit communities. This shows that Indian politics moved from one dominant party to many competing parties, giving more space to different voices.

The Congress party was the strongest party during this time and ruled at the Centre and in most states, especially during Nehru's leadership. Even then, many other political parties like the Socialists, Communists, and others were active, and a multi-party system developed. These opposition parties were weaker than Congress but still played an important role by criticizing the government and suggesting different policies. Congress was a broad and inclusive party with people from different classes and ideas. It followed a middle path with a left-leaning approach, focusing on nationalism, development, social justice, and equality. Nehru tried to keep the party united and democratic while slowly moving towards a socialist society.

At the same time, there were many internal problems and conflicts. There were differences between leaders like Nehru and Patel, and later between Nehru and Tandon, especially about policies and control of the party and government. Some groups like the Socialists left Congress, which weakened its radical side. Over time, Congress began to face issues like factional fights, corruption, decline in values, and loss of connection with people, especially youth. Many leaders became more interested in power than party work. Nehru tried to improve the situation and even made efforts like the Kamaraj Plan to strengthen the party, but these came too late. By the time Nehru died in 1964, Congress was still powerful but was becoming weaker and losing its earlier strength and unity.

During 1947–1965, many opposition parties tried to challenge Congress but could not become strong. The Socialist Party was formed earlier in 1934 and left Congress in 1948 because it wanted clear socialist policies. It had famous leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia, but it performed poorly in the 1951–52 elections, winning only 12 Lok Sabha seats. In 1952, it merged with the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) to form the Praja Socialist Party (PSP), but this party also suffered from internal fights and splits. Leaders kept leaving, and its strength kept falling in elections from 1957 to 1971. The Communist Party of India (CPI) also faced problems. It first supported the government in 1947, then opposed it and even supported armed struggle in 1948–49, which failed. Later, it joined elections and did well, winning 23 seats in 1952 and forming a government in Kerala in 1957. But it had many internal disagreements and finally split into CPI and CPM in 1964.

Other opposition parties also had limited success. The Bharatiya Jan Sangh, started in 1951, was a communal party supported by the RSS and focused on Hindu identity. It remained weak, winning only a few seats in elections from 1952 to 1967, mostly in north Indian states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Punjab. The Swatantra Party, formed in 1959 by leaders like C. Rajagopalachari, supported free business and opposed government control. It did well in the 1962 and 1967 elections, especially in states like Bihar, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Orissa, but declined after 1967. There were also many regional and communal parties like the DMK in Tamil Nadu, Akali Dal in Punjab, and Muslim League in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, but they were limited to certain areas. Overall, opposition parties remained divided and weak, which helped Congress stay in power during this period. (Chandra. A. et al. 2000)

Another important change is the start of coalition politics at the national level. From 1989 onwards, no single party got clear majority for many years. Governments were formed by alliances like the National Front (1989), United Front (1996), and later National Democratic Alliance and United Progressive Alliance. As studied by Atul Kohli (2001), this shows that power is now shared among many parties. Coalition politics helped smaller parties to take part in central government, but it also created problems like unstable governments and policy delays. Still, it became an important feature of Indian democracy.

The nature of political issues has also changed over time. In early years, politics was more about national unity, planning, and development. But after 1980s and 1990s, issues like caste, identity, and religion

became more visible. For example, the Mandal Commission implementation in 1990 increased focus on reservation and backward class politics. At the same time, economic reforms in 1991 brought new issues like privatization and development models. Scholars like Yogendra Yadav (1999) have shown that politics is now influenced by both identity and development issues. This shows that the nature of politics itself has changed with time.

The role of media and technology has increased very strongly in recent years. Earlier, people depended on newspapers and radio, but now television and digital media have become very important. Elections are now influenced by media campaigns, advertisements, and social media messages. This has made politics more visible and fast. At the same time, problems like fake news and wrong information have also increased. So, media has both positive and negative effect on Indian politics.

There is also a big change in voter behaviour. Earlier, people often voted based on caste, religion, or loyalty to a party. But now many voters think about development, government work, and leadership before voting. Studies by Yogendra Yadav (1999) show that voters have become more aware and independent. Participation of women and young voters has also increased over time. Election Commission data also shows that voter turnout has improved in many elections. This shows that democracy is becoming more participative.

Another important change is the growing role of regional politics in national decisions. Earlier, national politics was mostly controlled from the centre, but now regional parties play a strong role even in central government. Parties from states like Tamil Nadu, Bihar, West Bengal, and others have influenced national policies. This shows that Indian politics has become more federal in nature, where states have stronger voice.

Continuity in Indian Politics:

One important continuity in Indian politics is that the democratic system has remained strong, but this strength is not without problems. India has continued regular elections and peaceful transfer of power since 1947, which shows stability. As Granville Austin explained, democracy became part of political life in India. However, this democracy is sometimes affected by issues like money power, criminalization of politics, and misuse of authority. For example, during the The Emergency, democratic rights were restricted, which shows that democracy continued but also faced serious challenges. So, democracy in India is strong, but not perfect.

Another continuity is the importance of the Constitution as the guiding framework. The Constitution still controls political life and protects rights of people. The Supreme Court in the Kesavananda Bharati case said that its basic structure cannot be changed, which keeps the system stable. But at the same time, there have been many amendments and political misuse of constitutional provisions like Article 356 in earlier years. This shows that while the Constitution remains strong, its use depends on political leaders, which can sometimes weaken its spirit.

There is also continuity in the role of elections and institutions, which continue to function regularly. The Election Commission of India has played an important role in conducting elections and maintaining fairness. Parliament and judiciary also continue to work as key institutions. However, there are criticisms that Parliament debates have reduced in quality and disruptions have increased. Similarly, delays in courts and pressure on institutions are also concerns. This means institutions continue to exist and function, but their effectiveness is sometimes questioned.

Social factors like caste and religion also continue to influence politics, which shows both continuity and challenge. As Yogendra Yadav pointed out, voting behaviour is still influenced by social identities. Even today, many political parties depend on caste groups and religious support. While this helps in representation of different communities, it can also create division and identity-based politics instead of focusing on development. So, these social factors continue strongly, but they also create problems for national unity and policy-based politics.

Discussion:

Indian politics shows both change and continuity together. Change can be seen in the rise of many political parties, coalition governments, and new issues like identity politics and development debates. But at the same time, continuity is seen in the strong democratic system, regular elections, and the role of the Constitution. This shows that Indian politics does not completely change, but it develops step by step.

When we compare change and continuity, we can say that change happens in power and leadership, while continuity remains in the system and structure. Governments may change, parties may rise or fall, but the

basic system of democracy continues. For example, even after many political changes, elections are held regularly and people have the right to vote. This balance helps India to remain stable.

The impact of this balance is very important for democracy. Because of continuity, people trust the system, and because of change, new ideas and leaders come forward. This helps democracy to grow. Even when problems like corruption, inequality, or political conflicts exist, the democratic system continues to function and correct itself over time.

In terms of governance, change and continuity together improve the system slowly. Governments bring new policies and reforms, while institutions like Parliament, Judiciary, and Election Commission ensure stability and fairness. This shows that Indian politics is not perfect, but it is strong enough to handle both change and challenges while maintaining its democratic values.

Conclusion:

Indian politics since 1947 shows both strong change and strong continuity. On one side, there is clear change like decline of one-party dominance, rise of regional parties, coalition governments, new political issues, and more active voters. On the other side, important features like democracy, Constitution, elections, and institutions have continued without break. This shows that India has been able to change with time without losing its basic system. Even when there were challenges like political conflicts or the Emergency, the system survived and continued.

Overall, Indian politics is a mix of stability and development. Continuity has given strength and stability to the system, while change has allowed new ideas, groups, and leaders to come forward. But there are still problems like caste politics, inequality, and weak governance in some areas. So, Indian democracy is strong but still improving. It shows that the political system is not perfect, but it is flexible and capable of handling both change and challenges over time.

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