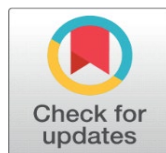


POST-COLONIAL THEORY: THE INTERSECTION OF TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN INDIAN POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

In Indian politics, the meeting point of modernism and tradition exposes a complicated relationship moulded by the country's post-colonial legacy. Post-colonial theory offers a critical prism through which one could view how ideas, institutions, and political systems of India still show traces of colonial past. In the shifting political climate of India, modern ideas such as democracy, secularism, and economic liberalisation coexist with traditional values based in religion, caste, and regional identification. This study examines how these opposing forces interact, usually generating tensions and disparities in policymaking and government. Important questions illustrating the complexity of this junction include the function of caste in electoral politics, the influence of religious traditions on political ideologies, and the effect of economic reforms on the traditional rural economy. Moreover, the study looks at the Indian Constitution as a mix of modernism and legacy where provisions like the Uniform Civil Code and reservation policies denote continuous discussions. Case studies on gender politics, federalism, and environmental policy expose the ongoing need to strike a balance between history and the needs of a modern state. Furthermore discussed is how young people and digital media honour cultural legacy while developing current political identities. The paper concludes with evaluating the opportunities and difficulties India faces in negotiating twin currents of tradition and modernism in its political path, so implying that the future of Indian democracy will depend on how well it can coalesce several forces while managing newly emerging socio-political issues.

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Keywords: Postcolonial Theory, Indian Politics, Tradition and Modernity, Caste Politics, Secularism, Electoral Politics, Religious Identity, Economic Reforms, Federalism



1. INTRODUCTION

In Indian politics, the confluence of modernity and legacy is a dynamic and evolving narrative reflecting the complexity of the post-colonial path of the country. Deeply rooted in history and culture, India has battled to preserve its old values while adopting modern political, social, and financial systems (Mitra, 2011). Postcolonial theory provides a framework for examining how colonialism has affected Indian politics, therefore influencing its thoughts, political structures, and social mores. The British colonial era fundamentally changed India's socio-political climate by bringing Western political structures and legal systems still influencing present political discourse (Nigam, 2020). But with these modern ideas, strongly embedded traditional practices including caste hierarchy, religious rituals, and regional identities also significantly affect political and voting behaviour. India's democracy amply illustrates this struggle between modernism and tradition since democratic objectives like secularism, individual liberty, and political equality often collide with

traditional social systems. Reflecting this cautious balancing, the Indian Constitution itself respects the many cultural and religious traditions of the country while trying to modernize society by means of moderate changes. The debate on provisions such as the Uniform Civil Code, reservation systems, and religious liberties reveals the ongoing necessity to harmonize these incompatible elements (Smith, 2010).

Furthermore, the rise of identity politics - particularly in relation to caste and religion - has propelled political movements mainly based on traditional values employing modern election processes. Economic changes, especially liberalization in the 1990s, draw attention even more the conflict between tradition and modernism since fast industrialization and globalization have sometimes collided with rural and agricultural practices. Notwithstanding these challenges, India's political arena is still active and contested where modernism and legacy are always questioned. India's negotiating of its future in the twenty-first century adds still more elements to this juncture since young people, technology, and globalization help to form political identities and ideas (Patel, 2017). Analysing significant issues - caste, religion, gender, and economic developments, this study aims to find how these forces of tradition and modernism interact in Indian politics, therefore assessing the implication of this junction for the future of Indian democracy. Analysing past and present occurrences helps the paper to offer a full picture of how India manages her rich legacy against the ideals of a modern state.

2. POST-COLONIAL THEORY: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In particular with regard to political, cultural, and financial legacies, postcolonial theory offers a critical lens through which one could study the residual effects of colonialism on once colonised countries. By so demonstrating how links of surviving colonial power affect modern nations, eminent intellectuals such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha have greatly shaped the postcolonial studies debate. Underlying the marginalising of voices from colonised societies, especially those of women and lower-caste people, Gayatri Spivak noted that her concept of the "subaltern" is sometimes misunderstood or misread in mainstream narratives. She underlines how the West produced false pictures of the East to maintain dominance and control, leading to the introduction of the concept of the 'Other' (Spivak, 2012). She criticised "harm done to Women/Third World women and non-Europeans" (Ambesange, 2016). Using his concept of "hybridity," Homi Bhabha underlined the creation of new identities and environments that lessens the binary opposition of the colonised person against the oppressor (Bhabha, 2012). He also looked at the cultural interactions between colonists and their descendants (Sawant, 2011; Child & Williams, 2014). Postcolonialism examines the colonial legacy that shapes Indian political institution, social structures and cultural attitudes. Further it argues that western model of government, courts and education system imposed by British changed India's indigenous structures and widen conflicts between precolonial traditions and postcolonial modernism (Mitra, 2011). Still extremely felt in modern Indian politics, these colonial legacy influence discussions on secularism, caste, religion, and economic policy (Brown, 2016). Postcolonial theory helps one to understand how tightly India's colonial past still ties her present political debate, policy discourse, and cultural dynamics (Chandra & Majumder, 2013). Unresolved colonial legacies show up as problems of political communalising, caste-based discrimination, and centralising of authority. By way of examination of the continuous clashes between indigenous traditions and contemporary political institutions, postcolonial theory reveals how colonialism still impacts the socio-political fabric of India.

3. INDIAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE: TRADITION VS MODERNITY

Particularly in nations like India where both elements coexist and often clash, the confluence of modernism and tradition symbolises a complex and shifting dynamic inside political discourse. While modernism explains the ideals, ideas, and systems brought about by processes of industrialisation, democracy, and globalisation, tradition is the inherited cultural, social, and religious practices passed down through generations (Mitra, 2011). Tradition in Indian politics is closely associated with caste structures, religious practices and regional identities which profoundly impact political behaviour. Conversely, modernity is expressed in constitutional democracy, secularism, gender equality, and the drive towards economic liberalisation (Smith, 2010). Discussions on issues such as religious changes, reservation policy, and the role of women in public life highlight particularly the tensions between these two forces. Political debate in India sometimes reveals a struggle between conventional beliefs stressing social hierarchy and community identification and modern ideas supporting individual rights and fair participation in governance. Colonialism greatly contributed to these problems since the British established contemporary political and judicial systems incompatible with India's traditional polity. For example, the introduction of Western education and legal systems disturbs accepted systems of knowledge and law, therefore generating a conflict between indigenous and colonial approaches of life. Moreover, colonialism

produced fresh social divisions and economic structures that still impact political dynamics in postcolonial India (Kumar, 2014). The struggle between tradition and modernity is not just a historical relic but also a dynamic force modern Indian politics often battles - that which past meets present. Political groups like Hindutva or Dalit rights negotiations reflect this intersection, which appeals to both traditional values and new aspirations, as they manage the complexities of aligning cultural legacy with the demands of modern political system.

4. CASE STUDIES: TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN INDIAN POLITICS

CASE STUDY 1: THE ROLE OF CASTE IN MODERN ELECTORAL POLITICS

While formal legal eradication of caste-based discrimination is an achievement, caste remains a fundamental determinant of political life in modern India (Gupta, 2005; Rao & Frankel, 1989). Sometimes vote-bank politics and caste-based coalitions allow political parties to ensure electoral triumphs. Particularly in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Tamil Nadu, where caste-based political organisations and movements have been very significant actors, caste is crucial in the development of political identities and voting blocs (Jones, 2012). Parties like the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which arranges Dalit support, for instance, show how caste identification is used as a weapon to negotiate modern political systems. Sometimes politicians placate specific caste groups by providing policies that would benefit them, such as government employment and educational reservations, in return for political support. Frequently in direct opposition to present democratic ideas of equality and social justice, this caste-based agitation creates a challenging intersection between traditional social institutions and modern politics. Although caste politics offers poor people more influence, it has also divided people and hampered the ultimate goal of a more inclusive and fair democratic society.

CASE STUDY 2: THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS TRADITION ON POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AND GOVERNANCE

Especially in terms of its influence on political narratives, religion plays a significant part in shaping political perceptions and governance in India. Supported by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and associates, Hindutva's development as a political ideology marks how political benefit is derived from religious identity. Hindutva seeks to define India's national identity by means of Hindu cultural and religious values, therefore supporting the belief that India is basically a Hindu nation. Policies that benefit the Hindu majority, such as the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and changes to school curricula stressing Hindu legacy, demonstrate how religious traditions have been infused into government (Brown, 2016). The political mobilisation of minority religious groups, like the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), which advocates for Muslims' political rights, reveals also the influence of religious legacy on government. Though religious traditions foster a sense of identity and belongingness, their influence on government raises questions on the secularism rooted in the Indian Constitution and the idea of inclusion in India's democratic system.

CASE STUDY 3: GLOBALIZATION, ECONOMIC REFORMS, AND THEIR IMPACT ON TRADITIONAL POLITICAL STRUCTURES

Particularly beginning under Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh in the 1990s, globalisation and economic reforms have fundamentally transformed India's traditional political environment (Kumar, 2014). Stressing market-driven development instead of state-led development, the liberalising of the Indian economy - which exposed the country to world markets and foreign investment - markedly changed the political environment. Along with these developments, fast urbanisation and industrialisation challenged accepted political structures including local government and agricultural economics. While it resulted in higher growth rates and the middle class's expansion, economic liberalisation produced inequalities especially in rural areas where traditional agricultural livelihoods were affected. Political parties and movements, especially those supporting rural and agricultural interests, such as farmers' unions, have responded by criticising policies they see to be detrimental for their way of life (Patel, 2017). Aimed to open the sector, the most recent farmers' demonstrations against agricultural advancements expose the ongoing clashes between conventional Indian political structures and the results of globalisation. These occurrences highlight the complex link between continuity of old sociopolitical systems and economic development.

5. THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY IN BALANCING TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Since modernism and tradition, the two schools of thought that seek to unite the nation, offer divergent perspectives on its future, Indian political discourse has long sought a compromise between the two. Both the Rashtriya Swayamsevak

Sangh (RSS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), "the political wing of the *Sangh Parivar*," support the Hindu nationalist ideology known as "Hindutva," which seeks to harmonise India's long-established Hindu traditions with contemporary State policies (Corbridge & Harris, 2013). Hindutva ideologues promote a shared Hindu identity while praising the nation's material and military achievements by promoting tradition as the foundation of the nation. Meanwhile, religious icons like the Ram Temple in Ayodhya are being constructed and digital India is making strides forward, the BJP's ambitions demonstrate how history is blending with contemporary modern ideas. The uniqueness with which Gandhian thought fuses tradition and modernisation is worth noting, nevertheless (Smith, 2010). Nonviolence, decentralisation, and self-sufficiency were some of the modern ideals advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, who had deep faith in India's traditional rural economy and spiritualism. By fusing modern democratic ideals with traditional rural communal life, his ideas of "Swaraj" (self-rule) and "Sarvodaya" (the welfare of everyone) pushed for a middle ground between technical advancement and rural communal life. Anna Hazare and other anti-corruption activists are at the forefront of modern political movements in India, as are campaigns for the rights of the Dalits. Progressive political reforms that tackle structural issues like social inequality and corruption can be pursued by these groups while still adhering to outmoded ideas of justice and equality. Indian political ideology is at a crossroads, with regional parties like the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) vying for power while simultaneously advocating economic modernisation and the preservation of indigenous languages and cultures (Singh, 2018). A political identity for India that is authentic to its past and adaptable to its contemporary problems is being sought after by all of these groups and ideas.

6. THE LEGACY OF BRITISH COLONIALISM ON INDIAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

The permanent change of the political structures and legal frameworks of the nation brought about by British colonial rule forms the pillar of postcolonial governance in India. Among other important institutions the British imported were legislative assemblies, codified legal systems still in use today, and a centralised bureaucracy. Though they were designed to represent British interests and combine colonial power, these institutions set the foundation for India's political system after her independence (Kumar, 2005). Originally known as the Indian Civil Service, the backbone of the Indian bureaucracy today is product of colonial government. The Indian legal system borrowed British legal ideas, especially the common law tradition directing national legal procedures. Still in effect today, the Indian Penal Code was written under British authority. Often running against India's native governmental structures, these Western systems - which were distributed and firmly anchored in community-based leadership like the Panchayat system - were along with Western ideas like democracy and secularism, which competed against the old social and religious institutions that had shaped Indian culture for millennia, the British brought significant changes. Particularly in spheres like caste, religion, and government, conflicts between these Western political ideas and local norms still arise. Sometimes the closely entwined political and religious identities of India run counter to the Western concept of secularism, which promotes keeping religion apart from politics. By institutionalising distinctions along caste, religion, and geography, the colonial strategy of divide and rule also affected political dynamics and created communal tensions still today. Although British dominance created a legacy of hierarchy and separation that still causes conflict and controversy in post-colonial India, bringing ideas of modern administration also brings ideals of British dominance.

7. NATIONALISM AND IDENTITY POLITICS

Especially during the creation of the Indian state and the struggle for independence, nationalism has greatly affected modern Indian politics (Kaviraj, 2010). Leading the resistance against British colonialism, the Indian National Congress (INC) promoted a concept of secular nationalism aiming at aggregating the different groups of India across religious, caste, and geographical divisions. Leading figures in support of a single Indian identity based on shared objectives for freedom and self-determination were Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Along with this secular nationalism, there are counter currents of cultural nationalism underlining the worth of India's Hindu past and customs. Established in 1925, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) developed to be a main advocate of Hindutva, a theory meant to define Indian national identity by Hindu religious and cultural characteristics. Later adopted by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Hindutva influences present political discussion by promoting Hinduism as vital to national identity, hence supporting a return to India's imagined golden time of Hindu civilization (Flåten, 2016). From this intersection of history with current political concepts, identity politics - where caste, religion, and regionalism take front stage in deciding political allegiances - has evolved. These identities help political parties to encourage people to establish caste-based parties such as the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which speaks for Dalit interests, and regional parties like the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu, therefore supporting Tamil identity (Pai, 1990). These movements

reflect how traditional social institutions still impact modern political processes, therefore creating a complex political terrain where identity politics serves both as a tool for divide and emancipation. The mobilization of caste and religious identities in electoral politics underlines the ongoing struggle to connect the objectives of a united, secular nationalism with the reality of India's immense socioeconomic and cultural heterogeneity.

8. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Smith 2010) studied "The Role of Tradition in Modern Governance" and argued that the political systems of today are heavily influenced by outdated ideals, particularly in nations that have experienced postcolonialism. Democracy, secularism, and legal frameworks coexist with traditional social hierarchies like caste and religion in a political environment that is shaped by the interaction between indigenous traditions and the legacies of colonial government systems, as shown in countries like India, according to the study. Smith stressed the importance of understanding this interplay in order to fully grasp the complexities of postcolonial governance.

(Jones 2012) studied "Caste and Democracy in India", he argued that the democratic framework of political equality in India has not succeeded to eliminate the significant influence of caste on politics. The research suggests that political parties may form voting blocs based on caste in response to policies and campaigns that target certain populations. Jones further emphasised the continued significance of caste in determining political affiliations and voting behaviour, especially in rural regions where caste disparities are deeply embedded in social and economic life.

(Kumar 2014) studied "Economic Liberalization and Traditional Economies in India". He argued that the liberalising reforms to India's economy in 1991 had a significant impact on the country's traditional rural economies. Despite fostering industrialisation and modernisation, the development widened economic disparities, particularly for small farmers and local businesses. The exclusion of traditional industries like agriculture from the liberalisation process, as pointed out by Kumar, creates tensions between the preservation of traditional livelihoods and the advancement of new capitalist development.

(Brown 2016) studied "Secularism and Religious Identity in Indian Politics". He contend that an essential aspect of Indian political rhetoric is the conflict between religious identity and secularism. The research looked at how political parties appeal to voters' religious beliefs in order to rally support, frequently erasing boundaries between the two realms. According to Brown, political leaders in India often use religious identities to win elections, which exacerbates communal tensions and undermines the secular ideal, even though the constitution of India explicitly states that all citizens are required to be secular.

(Patel 2017) studied "The Influence of Globalization on Indian Political Structures". He claimed that companies and government institutions in India have been transformed by globalisation, which has modernised the country's political economy. Nonetheless, the research confirmed that religious and caste systems still significantly impact who has political clout. Economic disparity and cultural tensions are two examples of the new problems brought about by globalisation, which, Patel said, combine with India's traditional social structures to shape political outcomes in complicated ways.

(Singh 2018) studied "Federalism and Regionalism in India" while contending that regional parties frequently oppose the federal government in an effort to safeguard indigenous languages, cultures, and customs; this is a potent example of regionalism in Indian federalism. The study zeroed in on states like as West Bengal and Tamil Nadu because of the significant influence that regional parties have in influencing policy at the local level and questioning national ambitions. In his study, Singh brought up the fact that India's federal system strikes a balance between national unity and regional autonomy, but it also causes friction between old ways of doing things and new ways of running the country.

(Gupta 2019) studied "Gender and Political Participation in India" and claimed that patriarchal conventions and conventional gender roles still prevent women from achieving leadership posts, despite the fact that their political engagement has grown. Social norms, family obligations, and the prevalence of male-dominated political systems were some of the obstacles that women in the study encountered on their path to political office. Patriarchal beliefs, according to Gupta, prevent women from fully participating in politics, even if contemporary feminist groups have sought for more gender equality.

(Sharma 2020) studied "Environmental Movements and Traditional Knowledge in India". He asserts that grassroots environmental movements in India rely heavily on traditional environmental practices like sustainable farming and the preservation of sacred groves. Traditional ways of life are in grave danger, as Sharma points out, due to contemporary industrialisation and development initiatives like dam construction and deforestation. In order to achieve sustainable development that is respectful of both cultural heritage and environmental conservation, the study stresses the need of integrating traditional ecological knowledge into modern ecological policy.

(Ahmed 2021) studied "The Role of Youth in Modern Indian Politics" and said that Young people are now able to participate in political activism in new ways, using digital media they are challenging old political systems. Ahmed's study is centred on environmental protests and anti-corruption campaigns that were spearheaded by young people through social media to garner support and educate the public. The study drew attention to the fact that young people are increasingly influencing contemporary political discourse as they negotiate the expectations of established social and familial systems.

9. CONSTITUTIONAL DILEMMAS: TRADITION VS MODERNITY

The remarkable Indian Constitution catches both the realities of India's past social systems and current concepts. Designed following India's 1947 independence, the Constitution embraces the modern ideas of democracy, secularism, and equality, therefore promoting a progressive and inclusive nation. It guarantees everyone's equal legal treatment, basic liberties, and freedom of religion (Brown, 2016). However, occasionally these contemporary concepts challenge accepted wisdom and social mores, which leaves unsolved constitutional questions in modern Indian politics. Among the most significant cases of this conflict is the fight on the Uniform Civil Code (Laborde, 2021), which aims to replace a common civil law applicable to all people with personal rules based on religious traditions. Proponents say it supports modern secularism and gender equality; opponents say it violates religious liberties—especially for minority groups. The reservation system, which provides affirmative action for historically marginalized groups such as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), reflects similar notions of social fairness. Sometimes, though, it is denounced for preserving caste distinctions even if it rests political and financial gains on caste identification. Judicial decisions on issues like the ban of triple talaq - quick divorce in Muslim communities or the reading of constitutional principles about freedom of religion generally reveal the contradiction between traditional customs and new constitutional norms (ibid). These difficulties highlight the complex nature of Indian society, in which the evolving constitutional vision always must negotiate the strongly rooted norms and social institutions defining the country. Usually, by means of mediation, the court aims to balance respect of history with the need to protect constitutional rights and values.

10. POLITICAL ECONOMY: TRADITION IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN ECONOMIC REFORMS

Since independence, India's political economy has undergone major transformation as modern capitalist changes outdated farming methods. From conventional agricultural methods to industrialized agriculture, the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s brought chemical fertilizers, highly yielding crop types, and advanced irrigation systems. Although the Green Revolution brought food self-sufficiency for India, it also increased economic inequalities between big and small farmers, therefore altering conventional rural economies and causing social upheaval (Harriss-White & Janakarajan, 1997). Leading the 1991 economic liberalizing projects, Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh exposed India's economy to global markets so accelerating this change. Following from the clear turn toward a market-driven model of a state-owned economy, fast industrialization, urbanization, and the middle class developed. These changes have also been quite significant on conventional political systems. Dependent on traditional livelihoods, rural and agricultural people have often been excluded in this new economic system, which fuels political movements opposing the predominance of corporate interests in industry and agriculture. Growing corporate political influence has further excluded conventional political players like farmers' unions by way of corporations like the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and other commercial conglomerates (Patel, 2017). This conflict between modern capitalist reforms and traditional rural lives still shapes Indian politics as leaders struggle to combine the needs of economic progress with the necessity to safeguard old communities. Recent farmer demonstrations against agricultural policies aiming at deregulating the sector and endorsing private investment call attention to the continuous clash between the forces of globalization and conventional agricultural interests.

11. FEDERALISM: REGIONAL TRADITIONS AND NATIONAL MODERNITY

India's federal structure lets the immense variety of the country be exploited in harmony between national modernism and regional traditions. The Indian Constitution gives states enormous autonomy allowing them to handle their own cultural, linguistic, and economical issues, thereby following a more fundamental national governance. With this federal arrangement, India has managed its pluralism—where each state usually reflects unique cultural and linguistic identities. Though often developing are disputes between the central authority reflecting modern national power and regional governments trying to preserve local customs and autonomy. Language politics is among the most visible

locations these tensions present themselves (Bhattacharyya, 2005). States such as Tamil Nadu, where the Dravidian movement has long advocated Tamil identity and fought Hindi domination, have objected to the national language being imposed upon them (Tillin, 2019). Comparably, such parties as the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal have consistently defied the national government over issues of regional autonomy, cultural preservation, and economic development. States with differing political and cultural traditions - most famously Jammu and Kashmir, whose special constitutional status was removed in 2019 - which fuels debates on regional autonomy and national integration - increase these tensions. Apart from a cultural one, the conflict for regional autonomy is an economic one since countries fight for resources and growth possibilities while aiming to preserve control over their own affairs. Case examples showing the ongoing struggle between regional traditions and national modernism inside India's federal structure include the political tensions in Jammu and Kashmir and the language politics in Tamil Nadu (Singh, 2018).

12. GENDER AND POLITICS: TRADITION VS MODERN ROLES

Women's involvement in Indian politics reveals the more general tension between traditional and modern roles since strongly established patriarchal traditions usually run against current feminist movements supporting women equality and representation. Historically, Indian women have been confined to traditional responsibilities within the house and their participation in public and political life limited by society norms. Still, since they acquired their independence, women have made tremendous political advancement as voters and leaders. Leaders like Indira Gandhi—who became India's first female Prime Minister—and more lately Mamata Banerjee and Mayawati have questioned accepted gender boundaries by adopting leadership roles in national and state politics. Notwithstanding these advances, patriarchal structures occasionally prevent women's participation and still provide minimal political representation. Advocates of women's reservation of seats in Parliament and state legislatures—which they think would guarantee more political participation—clearly reflect different views on women's rights; opponent see it as either unnecessary or divisive. Moreover, contemporary feminist movements in India—which focus on issues like sexual violence, reproductive rights, and economic empowerment—often run against accepted wisdom on women's responsibilities inside the home and society (Gupta, 2019). Women leaders balance the expectations of conventional gender roles with support of contemporary policies enhancing female equality and empowerment, therefore changing their representation in policy-making. Women's presence in Indian politics thus reveals that it is not easy to balance tradition with the demands of modernisation since women still fight for equal representation and participation in patriarchal political system.

13. MODERNITY IN POLITICS AND EDUCATION

Education has been extremely important in India in fostering political consciousness since both traditional and modern systems signify contestation between tradition and modernism. Indigenous education system in India centred on religious and philosophical ideas guided, for instance Gurukul system, in scriptures, ceremonies, and traditional knowledge (Fischer-Tine, 2006). Deeply ingrained in India's cultural history, these ancient institutions were meant to pass on knowledge from one generation to the next inside a certain community or religious group. However, the British colonial power began modern public education campaigns supporting Western science, knowledge, and secularism (ibid). English-language education and Western ideas helped universities to generate a class of educated elites absolutely essential in India's independence movement and post-independence administration. Leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru and B. R. Ambedkar vision a democratic, progressive India as a consequence of western education system. Even if modern education has gained front stage, traditional modes of education still survive, especially in religious institutions like madrasas and Vedic schools, therefore generating a dual education system that reflects the ongoing conflict between tradition and modernity. Particularly for poor populations, political emancipation nowadays primarily relies on educational access. Modern education has a big impact on political participation and leadership accordingly. Case studies of political leaders such as Nehru and Ambedkar—who were impacted by Western education—showcase how modern education has changed political ideas and leadership in India. Nonetheless, it is challenging to create a more inclusive and politically relevant modernism by combining old knowledge systems with modern one.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS: TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE VS MODERN DEVELOPMENT

Environmental politics in India reflect the struggle between accepted knowledge systems and the aspirations of modern growth. India's connection with the natural world has for millennia largely focused on traditional environmental practices including sustainable agriculture, community-based water management systems, and preservation of holy trees. Deeply rooted in religious and cultural ideas, many rural people view natural resources as holy and very necessary

for their way of life (Sharma, 2020). One such traditional environmental movement started in the 1970s when rural women clutched trees to stop their cutting. Inspired by the historical links of the community to the forest, the movement stood for a greater environmental ethic with sustainability and local stewardship front stage. Modern environmental challenges including industrialisation, urbanisation, and climate change have seriously taxed these old systems. Driven by temporary success more often than long-term sustainability, the search of economic progress leads in environmental degradation and social dislocation (Mishra, 2018). Environmental politics in India makes it quite difficult to balance present ecological policies with conventional knowledge grounded on experience. Though present environmental policies—such as the National Green Tribunal and renewable energy projects—aim to offset the repercussions of industrialisation and climate change, there is growing awareness of the need to adopt ancient wisdom into sustainable development plans. This dilemma between honouring ecological sustainability as well as cultural legacy and pushing modern development against preserving old environmental wisdom shapes India's environmental debate.

15. SECULARISM AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN INDIAN POLITICS

Deeply divisive in India, secularism reflects the more general struggle between modernism and religious legacy. Unlike the Western secularism, the Indian secularism enables many religions coexist in the public realm while the government maintains an objective posture on them. The Indian Constitution honours the religious diversity and prevent any religion to dominate the State (Brown, 2016). However, it has been observed that constitutional provisions on secularism have been violated on many account. The Ayodhya issue and the triple talaq speedy divorce process in Muslim society highlight the conflict between religious practices and modern constitutional values. These case studies expose how religious plurality constantly challenges secularism in Indian politics (Laborde, 2021).

16. THE ROLE OF MEDIA: TRADITION VS MODERN POLITICAL NARRATIVES

Though in recent years the clash between traditional and modern political narratives has grown more obvious, media has always been vital in influencing political debate in India. For the Indian public, conventional media - including print newspapers, radio, and television - have always been the principal sources of information and knowledge. These platforms reflect more traditional political beliefs and support established political players, therefore affecting public opinion by editorial opinions and reporting strategies compatible with conventional political narratives. However, the development of social media and digital media has changed political communication and opened more feasible direct public engagement between political leaders (Mahapatra & Plagemann, 2019). Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have made modern political movements possible, especially those driven by young people and grassroots activists. This has undermined traditional political narratives and produced new categories of political participation. Early campaigns, for instance, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) successfully mobilised support via social media, therefore evading traditional media gatekeepers and going straight to people. This shift has democratised political communication, giving once underprivileged people voice and enabling more active forms of political action (Darshan & Suresh, 2019). Conventional political players fit these forums to further polarising narratives, but the explosion of digital media has also introduced incorrect information, fake news, and political discord. Media's capacity to either support or undermine conventional political views is thus a two-edged blade since modern digital platforms offer opportunities for political innovation and involvement as well as new challenges for the integrity of political debate (ibid).

17. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: TRADITION IN MODERN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Reflecting India's particular postcolonial status managing the complexities of the international system, traditional values and modern global diplomacy have always informed India's foreign policy. India's attitude to foreign affairs has been essentially based on conventional concepts such as non-alignment and Panchsheel - the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. During the Cold War, Jawaharlal Nehru enunciated these principles, which underlie sovereignty, mutual respect, and non-interference, to maintain freedom from the superpower blocs. Non-alignment enabled India carve out a position for itself on the world scene as leader of the Global South by advocating the rights and interests of newly independent States. India has more fully blended into the global economy and international institutions transforming foreign policy to meet current diplomatic priorities including economic cooperation, security partnerships, and participation in global governance (Chacko, 2018). India's membership in multilateral organisations - BRICS, G20, and SCO - shows its increasing influence in world politics. India has also simultaneously embraced traditions to increase its soft power using cultural diplomacy. Projects such as the International Day of Yoga, which commemorates yoga as a symbol of India's cultural past, demonstrate how traditional ideas could be used to boost India's prominence outside.

The postcolonial philosophy of South-South cooperation also influences India's foreign policy since India constantly push the rights of poor nations on global platforms (Ghosh, 2019). India seeks to be a world power while still respecting its historical legacy, so India's foreign policy encounter considerable challenges in balancing modern global diplomacy while preserving its culture past.

18. POLITICAL MOVEMENTS: TRADITIONAL VS MODERN ACTIVISM

Political movements in India reflects shifting dynamics between tradition and modernity. Mahatma Gandhi adopted spiritual strategies, based on Jain, Hindu and Buddhist teachings, of resistance to fight against British colonial state. His method of non-violent, civil disobedience, and self-reliance finds echo in contemporary social and political movements. The 2011 anti-corruption campaign (India Against Corruption) led by Anna Hazare drew on Gandhi's legacy to inspire millions of Indians in a nonviolent protest against government corruption

New means of mobilisation - particularly via digital channels and social media - have changed present political engagement in India. Comparative study of grassroots activity on both conventional and modern platforms reveals that although traditional leaders like Gandhi set the stage for political activity in India, modern political activists like Anna Hazare and student protestors have modified these strategies to handle modern political issues.

19. CONCLUSION

Indian politics revolves around historical, social, and cultural elements of both the tradition and modernism. India's politics has been shaped by modern democratic ideas of secularism, equality, and economic liberalisation; nonetheless, old values anchored in caste, religion, and regional identity remain rather important. India's task is to strike a balance between these conflicting forces in such a manner that contemporary government and development do not compromise cultural legacy while promoting inclusivity and advancement. Future course of India's political and social system depends on navigating these conflicts.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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