



# A Study of Uttar Pradesh's Regional Political Parties Emerge

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**Abstract:** Uttar Pradesh is sometimes considered the political epicentre of India, and this research looks at how regional political parties there came to be and what effect they had. Caste, religion, and socioeconomic position are some of the sociopolitical aspects that are investigated in relation to the dynamics of political mobilisation within the state. In Uttar Pradesh, regional political parties are very important since they represent local interests and help shape policy, especially when it comes to fighting for the rights and dreams of under-represented communities. A multi-party system that reflects the state's varied socio-cultural fabric has replaced a single-party supremacy in Uttar Pradesh's party system throughout the years. The article also takes into account the impact of notable groups like the Yadavs and Muslims, the consequences of mobilisation based on caste, and the emergence of political movements that challenge established power systems. In the end, this research highlights how regional parties play a crucial role in encouraging representation and balancing power within India's larger political system.

**Keywords:** Uttar Pradesh, Caste, Religion, Socioeconomic, Political Parties, Regional Parties

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the years, Uttar Pradesh has established itself as a major player in India's politics, earning it the nickname "India's political epicentre." A myriad of elements intersect to produce the particular political dynamics of Uttar Pradesh, a state known for its enormous diversity and nuanced socioeconomic makeup. There is a wide variety of castes, classes, and communities inside the state's social structure, and each one has its own unique economic standing and political goals. No community is excluded from the political scene due to caste-based politics; all groups, including upper castes, Dalits, OBCs, and Muslims, actively participate. How political discourse is constructed and disseminated is greatly affected by this. On top of that, Muslim politics is still very much alive and well, and the Yadav community is quite influential. In the first two decades after India gained independence, the Congress party had a strong grip over Uttar Pradesh's politics. Afterwards, the state saw the rise of several political factions representing Hindutva, Mandal, other backward castes, Kisan, and Dalit ideologies. [1]

The complex socioeconomic structure and diverse population of the state have given rise to political groups that fight for the rights and goals of certain minority groups. When it comes to voicing community demands, shaping the political climate, and tackling the complex sociopolitical concerns facing the state of Uttar Pradesh, the political parties play a significant role. Recognizing Uttar Pradesh as a crucial area in national politics, the researcher has studied and analyzed its political scene generally. Starting with a time of one-party domination and moving into factional politics, the party system in Uttar Pradesh has seen

many stages. Political priorities have also shifted, with the emphasis now being on the advancement of backward castes rather than farmer concerns.[2]

A new threat to the existing upper-caste supremacy has emerged: the mobilization of lower-caste people. A demand for reservation for lower castes has also emerged alongside this mobilization, with socialists playing an important role in promoting this cause. Also, the region's backward castes have been empowered in large part by the Janata Dal. In examining the problem of caste mobilization, the Mandal Report has been helpful, especially in light of the Yadav community's ascent to political prominence in Uttar Pradesh. Finally, major national and regional political parties have recently emerged in Uttar Pradesh.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study's foundational material comes from secondary sources that trace the development of political parties in Uttar Pradesh, including as historical records, official documents, and scholarly papers. The influence and development of regional parties in Uttar Pradesh's politics may be better understood via an examination of election outcomes, party platforms, and political movements. We employed academic interpretations of regional politics, statistics from the Election Commission of India, and applicable case studies to provide light on party loyalty patterns, voter mobilisation, and the socio-economic variables that shape regional political agendas. Understanding the intricacies and changes of Uttar Pradesh's party structure was made possible via the use of secondary data, rather than primary data collecting.

## **RESULT**

### **Uttar Pradesh's Political Landscape in General**

Being referred to as "India's political heart," Uttar Pradesh has always played a significant role in India's political landscape. This state is important in American politics because of the many groundbreaking events and advancements that took place there. This area has played a pivotal role in Indian politics throughout history, from the reigns of the Mauryas and Guptas to that of the Sultanate, the Mughals, the British, and even in the years after India's independence. Being India's most populated state, Uttar Pradesh is also the state that sends the most lawmakers to the federal legislature. After India gained its independence, the state of Uttar Pradesh had to deal with the difficult division and the large Muslim population that lived there. Important political discussions involving Muslims occurred in the state of Uttar Pradesh, marking a turning point in the electoral history of the area. Some of the topics covered in these discussions were the Hindi-Urdu divide, the anti-Shahbano campaign, the Ayodhya movement, and the fight to outlaw the slaughter of cows. [3] Uttarakhnad has absorbed a small percentage of UP's population and land area, but the state's political importance has not diminished. Not only did UP generate a remarkable crop of national movement leaders, but it also produced some of the most prominent personalities in Congress and the opposition in the years after independence. After the state gained its independence, the INC stormed to power and remained there for a long time. The idea that the ruling party or coalition in India's federal government is inherently tied to the one that won the state of Uttar Pradesh is incorrect. The Congress party's fall from power in Uttar Pradesh meant that it could no longer exert its hegemonic political influence in the state.

Therefore, it is true to say that the nation's political strength depends on how Uttar Pradesh is governed. Despite stepping down from its once dominant position in defining the federal administration, Uttar

Pradesh remains a politically powerful state as the epicenter of the change from Congress dominance to the post-Congress age. After the assembly elections of 1989, which were marked by political instability and fractured outcomes, there was a noticeable change in the structure and administration of politics. After achieving remarkable levels of organization and cohesiveness in the state of Uttar Pradesh, the Congress party's coalition—which was marked by its varied and inclusive nature—has disintegrated. The unity of upper-caste, Dalit, and Muslim communities was central to the centrist movement's political philosophy. Even after the Congress period ended, non-Congress groups in Uttar Pradesh are still fighting for a new social equilibrium. [4]

### **The Evolution of Democratic Party System in Uttar Pradesh: From Monopoly to Factional Politics**

Uttar Pradesh's political party system has gone through five distinct epochs of development. The Indian National Congress (INC) dominated a disorganized and disorganised multi-party system in the first stage, which began with the 1951 general elections and continued until the mid-1960s. Later on, a second phase developed, marked by the rise of several political groups that opposed the first. A number of states formed coalition administrations during this time, most notably after the 1967 general election, as a result of internal strife within the Congress Party. During this time, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a national emergency and, in 1977, elections in Uttar Pradesh produced the state's first non-Congress administration.

In the third stage, which lasted from the 1970s to the 1980s, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), socialist groups, and regional parties like the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Telgu Desham Party (TDP) all saw expansion. The Indian National Congress (INC) also recovered power during this time. Several unstable alliances were formed during the 1990s, marking the fourth phase, which was characterized by the polarization of caste and religion. The top four political parties were unable to seize power due to the way votes were distributed among them. In addition, all coalitions fell apart due to the social polarization and fierce inter-party competition that characterized the election.

The situation leveled out in the 2000s when national parties lost influence in the state and regional parties made significant gains after shedding their anti-caste rhetoric and adopting more inclusive platforms and strategies in the election. In the most recent and current phase of the party system, the BJP-led NDA administration took over the state and toppled the long-ruling Congress party as well as other regional parties. Despite the fact that the BJP won the 2017 Assembly elections handily while the Congress and other regional parties suffered crushing losses, the SP staged a triumphant return in the 2022 election, increasing its seat total from 43 to 111.

Accordingly, it is quite important in the northern Indian states where Hindi is the official language. Up until 1974, the Indian National Congress (INC) was the most powerful party in the state's multi-party system. This political grouping took first place among minor parties in the 1951 state assembly elections, winning 388 of the 429 seats up for grabs (or around 48% of the overall vote share and 48% of the Assembly seats). With 12% of the vote and 13.68 percent of the seats, the Socialist Party (SP) is now the country's number two political party. However, it lagged far behind the INC. The INC's dominating victory was fueled by its reputation as the driving force behind the country's independence and its strong organizational foundation. The lack of formidable opposition also played a role in the INC's triumph in the state's Assembly elections. The charismatic state leaders, who were revered for their greatness and free from self-serving aspirations,

also played a major role in the party's solid foundation. The party's election results in the area were significantly impacted by Pandit Pant's leadership abilities, which were crucial in maintaining the party's reputation in the state. He had great political acumen, which allowed him to control and subdue the enemies, rivals, and dissidents. However, the party's dominance in the state came to an end in 1955 when he stepped down from state politics as a result of his appointment to the federal ministry.

When the Pandit Pant left, a period of internal turmoil, defection, voluntary office resignation, and self-serving political manoeuvring began. At the same time that the aforementioned occurrence occurred, the political party's share in the regional legislature and the national election fell. So, in the 1977 state election, the Janata Party finally succeeded the party. Following Pandit Pant's departure, two factions emerged: the 'dissidents,' who criticized the party's leadership and state administration, and the 'ministerialists,' who criticized the party's frequent interference and dictates in state administration. [5] Congress lost ground in the state due to the disorganized state government. With 286 out of 430 seats up for grabs in the 1957 state assembly elections, INC garnered almost 42% of the vote and seats contested. When compared to the 1951 election, INC's 102 seat victory was a significant decrease.

### **Political Movement: From Commoners to Repressed Groups**

Understanding the dynamics and changes in Uttar Pradesh's politics requires looking back to the 1980s, a time of many ideological and political conflicts. There have been several farmer's movements and their political equivalencies in the state, and they have all started to fade away on a national level. There was a dramatic shift in the way political interests in Uttar Pradesh came together and were mobilized as a result of the ideological differences stated before, which led to a series of party splits and mergers. The main mobilizing approach of the political leaders and parties vying for power within the Janata Parivar shifted from a general categorization of backward classes or Kisan identity to one that concentrated on caste and identity. In reality, parties try to engage individuals across a range of political and ideological dimensions; they do not mobilize solely on a single component. Bruce Graham argues that many sorts of religion, economic, caste, land, regional, and sectoral interests have always manifested as political agendas in Uttar Pradesh. [6] The factional structure of the Janata Parivar reflected this variety of interests; it was made up of many parts with different and often incompatible aims.

In the past, ideological and personal rivalries among socialist party leaders have caused the party to split and even combine on occasion. Disagreements between leaders, which sometimes took the form of splits, sometimes originated in more theoretical theological disagreements. [7] Caste and party control were two of the main points of contention throughout the 1980s.

Not only did different political heavyweights within Charan Singh's Lok Dal support different candidates, but significant members of different castes also did so, with the Jat supporting Ajit Singh and the Yadavs supporting Mulayam. In the 1980s, caste-based mobilization became consolidated with the resurgence of the issue of Other Backward Classes (OBC) extension of quota privileges. This led to a shift in the sociological makeup of socialist formations, which had previously been dominated by members of higher castes, and now included more individuals from lower castes.

A new political mechanism emerged in the 1990s, altering the fundamental character of UP's party system, as a result of the convergence of religious and caste-based mobilizations. While Congress fell apart, three

major political parties—the BJP, the BSP, and the SP—saw gains in both organizational base and electoral success. Parties in the 1990s formed unstable alliances since they couldn't get majorities on their own; this caused the state to experience President's Rule many times.

In the aftermath of the Babri Mosque's demolition, three political factions have remained in power. There were three separate chief ministers in the four years and 169 days that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was in power in the state. Over the course of its seven years in power, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) governed the state in partnership with the BJP twice and the SP once. The Samajwadi Party (SP) ruled the state for 107 days prior to the 2017 Assembly elections. For a total of two years and 208 days, the President's Rule was declared three times within the same time frame. The state has been under the administration of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) since 2017 when they gained a comfortable majority in the legislature. In contrast to its last term, when it controlled 312 MPs, the political party now has 255 seats in the legislature.

With 111 seats and 32.06% of the vote, the Samajwadi Party became the state's second-largest political party in the 2022 assembly elections, marking a significant improvement over the previous year. The BJP administration in Uttar Pradesh, headed by Yogi Adityanath, faces a major challenge from the SP's comeback.

### **An Opposition to Upper-Caste Dominance in Uttar Pradesh: Lower-Caste Mobilization**

In the last ten years, the political involvement of OBCs has been more visible in the Hindi-speaking regions of the north, especially in Uttar Pradesh. As a sociological category, the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) occupy a space between the untouchables and the higher castes. The majority of these people belong to the Shudra caste, which is the fourth lowest in the ancient Hindu social structure based on the varna system. Overwhelmingly, people from OBC backgrounds work in agriculture or skilled crafts, making up over half of India's population. Nevertheless, they have always been considered less important by society. There is cause for worry about the persistent public domination of upper castes due to the expansion of this specific group.

One may make the case that there are two distinct strategies used by those who sought to depose the ruling urban elite of higher caste in the northern Indian states.

Kisan, or the mobilization of people as farmers, was the primary goal from the outset. Notable personalities like Chhotu Ram—who was at the vanguard of this project in Punjab—and Swami Sahajanand—who became a major member of the Bihar Kisan Sabha in the 1930s—were among the agricultural castes, including the Jat community, who championed its inception before India's independence. [8]

This alternate perspective, which tended to center on caste identities, was mostly advocated by socialist leaders like Rammanohar Lohia who considered caste as the greatest obstacle to creating a fair society. People who worked in agriculture were encouraged by the Kisan School to unite around common economic and social goals. On the other hand, socialist leaders who concentrated on caste-based politics pushed for caste-based reservations, especially in government positions, in an effort to form an alliance of non-elite groups via affirmative action programs. There were some shared features between the social categories shown by the two views, but ultimately, they diverged. The major proponents of "Kisan politics" were



peasant-proprietors who tried to unite "the peasants" into a single social class in order to further their own interests and keep the lower classes in their place. The caste system was really put in place to safeguard the latter.

These two strategies have been significant in the recent past in bringing middle-caste peasants and other backward classes (OBCs) into North Indian politics. In the 1960s, socialists and members of Charan Singh's movement were well-represented in the state legislatures of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. It was at this moment that the first major changes began. Charan Singh and his allies worked tirelessly during the 1970s and 1980s to make Kisan politics a reality. Socialists inside the Janata Dal party embraced the anti-establishment rhetoric in the late 80s and early 90s. They put the recommendations of the Mandal Commission into action by concentrating on quota politics. Consequently, the Kisan front became deeply divided along caste lines, with intermediate-class peasant landowners alienating themselves from the Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

### **Socialists' Role in Calling for Lower Caste Reservation**

Among the lower castes, Rammanohar Lohia was perhaps the first to recognize their importance. Lohia, moved by Marxism and not a member of the lower castes himself, vowed to fight for their rights. Lohia said, "caste is the most overwhelming factor in Indian life" in response to those who wanted to look at things through a class lens. [9]

For all their good intentions, many socialists hold the mistaken belief that ending economic disparity would automatically eradicate caste inequality. Economic disparity and caste inequality are two sides of the same coin, and they don't see one other as evil. Affirmative action programs, or what he called "unequal opportunities," were something he passionately advocated for, and he did so for both the constitutionally recognized Scheduled Castes and the Other Backward Classes.

In a world where everyone gets a fair shot, the castes that have maintained liberal education traditions over the last 5,000 years will naturally rise to the top. Exceptionally talented individuals from lower castes would be the only ones capable of overcoming this tradition. In order to level the playing field in this conflict, those who have been repressed so far would need to be granted uneven chances. [10]

Both Nehru's plan to nationalize private property and Marxist ideas about revolution are exemplified by "vested-interest socialism" in Lohia's view, as they lack the ability to transform Indian society.

In Indian civilization, there is a set caste for workers with brains; they are considered high-caste along with the army caste. They would keep supplying state and industry managers long after the political and economic revolution was over. The majority of the population would be maintained in a condition of relative constant bodily and mental lowliness. But just as currently, high-caste status is justified economically and by birth or skill, so too would it be by ability. Because of this, the majority of India's intellectuals belong to the upper caste, and they despise any discussion of a social and psychological revolution that would lead to a fundamental shift in the country's language, caste system, or theoretical foundations.

It has a broad, anti-caste stance. It may theoretically criticize caste with all the vehemence it wants, provided it is free to do the same with the banners of merit and equal opportunity. What it lacks in regard

to birth caste it makes up for in regard to merit caste. No one can deny its usefulness in improving communication skills, etiquette, adaptability, and efficiency in daily tasks. This undeniable excellence has been laboriously constructed over the course of five thousand years.

"Even the Shudra has his faults," Lohia said, revealing his lack of adoration for India's rural populace. But this didn't stop Lohia from thinking the Shudra deserved special treatment; in particular, he thought he should be "pushed into positions of authority and leadership." The speaker said that quotas for administrative roles and political candidates were necessary, but they were critical of affirmative action programs in schools.

The fundamental rationale for reservations was to empower lower-caste folks by giving them opportunities for upward mobility. A proposal to set aside at least 60% of administrative jobs for members of the Other Backward Classes was made during the 1959 Socialist Party's third national convention. A few months before to the third general election, in April 1961, at the party's fifth annual session, this idea was further solidified. After this, the election manifestos or programs of Lohia's political party advocated for the concept of "preferential possibilities," which was explained by the unique make-up of caste society. The program approved at the Samyukta Socialist

Party's (SSP) first convention in April 1966 clearly indicated this. Keep in mind that having equal opportunity is different from being equal. The idea of equal opportunity cannot give rise to a more equitable society in a culture where social stratification is based on birth. Backward castes, Harijans (Scheduled Castes), Adibasis (Scheduled Tribes), etc., must in fact be denied chances due to the established, conventional conceptions about aptitude and merit. The underprivileged will inevitably overtake the more privileged within a fair amount of time if the concept of favored chances is applied alone. [11]

## **Major Uttar Pradesh National Parties**

### **1. Indian National Congress:**

The Indian National Congress, often called the Congress Party, is the country's longest-running major political party. The fight for Indian independence from the British Empire was led by the Indian National Congress, which was founded in 1885. Following India's independence, the aforementioned political party went on to form the bulk of the country's administrations and was often prominent in the governments of other states. The Indian National Congress made headlines during India's independence struggle for its massive demands and mobilizations.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Jayaprakash Narayan, Jivatram Kripalani, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Rajendra Prasad, and many more were all members of the Congress who rallied behind Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian independence cause. These people believed in Gandhi's nonviolent strategy of Satyagraha, which led to freedom. During the latter years of British rule, the Congress was associated with Gandhi's spiritual guidance and leadership. Jawaharlal Nehru became the only unopposed head of the Indian National Congress after India gained independence in 1947 and Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated. Indira Gandhi took up the political leadership role from her father. She became more dictatorial as India's prime minister and president of the Congress party, leading to party divisions. Despite

strong resistance, she proclaimed a national emergency in 1975. Voting put an end to the state of emergency in 1977. Under Indira Gandhi's dictatorial leadership, the Congress Party suffered its first electoral defeat in 1977 at the hands of the Janata Party. [12]

The Nehru-Gandhi era is still very much alive and well in the highest echelons of the party. Across the nation, the Congress has been victorious in many general elections. In the aftermath of the Lok Sabha elections in 2004, Congress established the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was appointed. After Manmohan Singh was re-elected as prime minister of India in the 2009 Lok Sabha election, the United Progressive Alliance took back control. But the 2014 Indian General Elections were a resounding loss for the Congress party, which managed to secure only 44 out of 543 Lok Sabha seats. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) stormed to victory as part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). A democratic, socialist, and secularist ideology is upheld by the Congress. In its platform, the party states its commitment to democratic socialism and highlights the anticipated role of the government in the country's projected economic progress. The party predicted in its 1989 platform that the Nagarpalika and Panchayati Raj laws will provide "power to the people." The document also makes a commitment to reviving the cooperative movement so that it may serve as a grassroots political democracy on steroids.

## **2. Bhartiya Janta Party:**

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), literally "Indian People's Party" in English, is a major national political party in India right now. On the political spectrum, it is a major right-wing faction. It clings tenaciously to cultural nationalism via social conservatism and integral humanism. This particular organization is very influential within the larger network of operational entities known as the "Sangh Parivar." Prominent party members Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani established the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1980. Both people were members of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), the political offshoot of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a cultural and nationalist group that arose in India after independence.

In 1951, with the intention of curbing the expanding political power of the Indian National Congress (INC), Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee established the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS). The INC was seen as having compromised on several fronts, including appeasing the Muslim minority, in order to preserve the political and cultural integrity of India. The BJS began to gain clout under the RSS banner. [13]

## **CONCLUSION**

Uttar Pradesh's political scene exemplifies the importance of regional parties in India's democratic system for representing minority groups and local concerns. Party loyalty and voting patterns have been swayed by caste-based mobilisation in the past, but regional parties promote a more representative government by attending to issues that national parties may ignore. The change from a one-party system in Uttar Pradesh to a multi-party system shows a trend towards a more varied political structure that includes people from different economic, religious, and caste backgrounds. Greater decentralisation has resulted from this process, which has helped strike a balance between national unity and regional concerns. Last but not least, regional parties continue to play a significant role in Uttar Pradesh, which is representative of a national trend towards regionalism in India.



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