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ASPIRING MODERNITY, LINGERING TRADITIONALISM: EXPLORATIONS OF CLIENTELE & PATRONAGE POLITICS IN INDIA

Introduction

Very few concepts have evoked passionate and intense debates in social sciences as the inter-linked (either in opposition or in continuum) conceptualizations of tradition & modern (modernity) have effectively done so. The varied reasons of the same are not farfetched. If the tradition/s elicit/s among the mass a deep sense of nostalgia wherein the past is considered as 'golden', sacred and pristine; on the other hand, the idea of modernity and to become 'modern' appears to be an intoxicating experience. In between these two so-called extremes, the totality of the social life oscillates. However, it needs to be cautioned that such a dichotomous binary division of the social reality is a futile exercise in itself as there are elements of both in any given socio-political setup. Needless to say, the specter of power, domination and politics is very much a part of the social reality. In a way, politics is about power and most importantly who gets it and how. In contemporary times, democracy has emerged as a singular expression of sharing of political power in a justified and acceptable manner. It is considered as justified as it is based on free-fair elections conducted at regular interval. The earliest form of governing structure which later on paved way to state (a sovereign political entity) was for all practical purposes encircled by the primordial identities of kith & kin. At this place, the Weberian contributions to power & domination and their bases of legitimacy are worth mentioning. For Weber, "Rulers — most often patriarchal authorities and patrimonial princes — are legitimized by lineage, custom, and tradition" (Titunik 2005: 144). Thus the political power in earlier pre-democratic times was centered on those who may or may not have a clear articulation of their politics but they certainly had more number of people aligned to them as a result of marital or affinal ties. Thus, such a politics was anchored in the traditional ties rather than the intrinsic value of the political perspective.

With the emergence of modernization thesis in the American & European countries during 1950s and 1960s, we have been led to believe in

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the 'dominant' discourse of political modernization wherein the political behaviour of the mass will be more in tune with the party politics program i.e. there will be a sense of political culture rather than clientelism which is defined by Francis Fukuyama (2014) as "the trading of votes and political support for individual benefits rather than programmatic policies". If one looks into the writings of proponents of modernization thesis during 1950s and 1960s; for instance Daniel Lerner's *The rise of modernization theory: modernizing the Middle East* (1958); it argues that it is in the process of political modernization that the pristine form of political culture devoid of any 'traditionalism' emerges. Needless to say "The major themes taken up by modernization studies included ...... the aids and obstacles to the emergence of modern political institutions" (Deshpande 2004: 174). Thus, "Patronage as a phenomenon within complex societies has been ascribed to the survival in them of residual 'traditional' elements ...... eradication of these elements by the modernization process" (Gibbon and Higgins 1974: 28). Similarly, Roniger views "clientelism as an archaic phenomenon of traditional and agrarian societies" and argues that "clientelism and patron-client relationships would eventually disappear in the course of development or democratization" (2004: 355). Pye (1966) has pointed out that political modernization will entail such a system of politics which will have "the demand for universalistic laws, respect for merit rather than birth, and generalized concepts of justice and citizenship" as some of its features. Interlinking the earlier form of state and patron-client relationship within the overarching framework of modernization, Eric Wolf in his classic work titled *Peasants* (1966) argues that "Similarly, a modernizing society which wishes to increase and diversify its resource base on a neotechnic model may have to transcend the many-stranded coalitions of the patron-client type" (1966: 94).

Thus we see that political modernization was considered crucial for the developing countries like post-independent / post-colonial India in the process of moving closer towards a more matured & advanced form of political setup christened as democracy. In Indian context, Rudolph and Rudolph ([1967] 2010: 3) have thus pointed out that "'modernity' assumes that local ties and parochial perspectives give way to universal commitments and cosmopolitan attitudes." Another comprehensive exploration of political development & modernisation is outlined by Yogendra Singh in *Modernization of Indian Tradition* (1986). For him, democracy in the West emerged through "... breakdown in the medieval system of patrimonial authority relationships..." (1986: 113) which was characteristic of feudal hierarchical system of estates. Accordingly, both clientelism and patronage have been considered primitive and traditional features of political behaviour and are destined to be routed out by modernisation. Here it is important to note that Clientelistic politics in the conventional sense is understood primarily as the distribution of public goods by those in political seats of power among the common mass in return for political support and/or loyalty and thus is based on interpersonal

relationships & personal alliances. It can also include benefits intended to influence political preferences of the people concerned.

The paper is organised as follows. The next section outlines the conceptual & definitional aspects of clientelism and patronage politics. It sets out certain features of the same. The second section of the paper examines how *Jajmani* System can be situated within the clientele politics framework. It argues that inter and intra caste ties have been fundamental in securing political ties & support base in the post-colonial India. The third section explores the changing forms of clientelistic & patronage politics in India. In the process of doing so, this section builds upon some of the recent studies which bring out the distinctive nature of clientelistic & patronage politics both at the regional as well as national levels. The Section also looks into the subtle changes undertaking place into the same due to the arrival of neo-liberal Indian state. The arguments are drawn together in the final section of the paper.

Conceptual Delineation: Clientele, Patrimonial & Patronage Politics

It is pertinent to understand that the clientelistic form of politics and its location in the political discourse have been dominating the study of political life in Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America. In other words, the politics of developing countries are often described as 'clientelist'. Clientelistic politics has its anthropological and sociological roots in the patron-client relationship based on patronage and obligations. Some of the definitional understanding of the same is warranted at this place. According to Eric Wolf, "…the power of the patron depends in large part upon his ability to distribute some share of the all-too-limited supply of goods and services" (1966: 94). Commenting on the nature of the 'returns' by the clients, at another place he writes that "These are, first, demonstrations of esteem. A second contribution by clients to patrons is offered in the form of information on the machinations of other. A third form of offering consists in the promise of political support. Here the element of power emerges that is otherwise masked by reciprocities" (Wolf 2001: 180). Thus what emerges that patrons are more responsible to distribute 'tangible' goods among their clients, the latter reciprocates in 'intangible' return gifts or gestures. Again, the relationship between them is not devoid of the power hierarchy as on account of his/her material richness, the patron is considered superior to the client who is dependent on his/her patron for his day-to-day needs and survival.

In his now classic work *Patron-client politics and political change in southeast Asia* (1972), James C. Scott (1972: 91-113) defined patron-client relationship as "The patron-client relationship — an exchange relationship between roles — may be defined as a special case of dyadic (two-person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide

protection or benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services, to the patron."[1] Subsequently, he highlighted three 'services' as inbuilt in the patron-client relationship: labor services and economic support; military or fighting duties; and political services such as canvassing or otherwise acting as an agent of a politician. S.N. Eisenstadt and Louis Roniger have outlined a list of 'core analytical characteristics' of patron-client relations. Some of these are "a) Patron-client relations are usually particularistic and diffuse. b) The interaction on which they are based is characterized by the simultaneous exchange of different types of resources, above all instrumental, economic, as well as political ones (support, loyalty, votes, protection) on the one hand and promises of solidarity and loyalty on the other. …. patron-client relations are based on very strong elements of inequality and of differences in power" (1980: 49-50).

Hilgers has succinctly 'differentiated' between patronage and clientelism and states that "Patronage is closely linked to clientelism, although its key defining characteristic, the discretionary distribution of public office, is not necessarily shared by clientelism" (2011: 575). Bearfield (2009: 73) has associated the term patronage with anthropology while studying peasant societies and has asserted that "Patronage has been an essential tool of governance throughout history"; yet it needs to be highlighted that there are some fundamental differences in the ways in which the patronage and client-patron relationships have been understood in Anthropological explorations on one hand and political deliberations on the other. According to Weingrod, "To the anthropologist patronage refers to a type of social relationship, while to the political scientist patronage is a feature of government. The anthropologist who studies patronage considers "dyadic contracts", while the political scientist studies a formal organization. Patronage for anthropologists is an enduring relationship, while in the political science sense patronage is most clearly enunciated during election campaigns" (1968: 380). Piliavsky (2014: 6) states that "Patronage first came to the fore of the social sciences in the 1960s and 1970s, mainly in Mediterranean and Latin American peasant studies" wherein "Patron-client relations formed the backbone of 'traditional' politics and were the main political tool of tribals, peasant and the urban poor." Roniger has outlined that "In the political realm, clientelism is associated with the particularistic use of public resources and with the electoral arena. It entails votes and support given in exchange for jobs and other benefits" (2004: 354). From the definitions given above, there emerges a scenario wherein the politics is not governed by the programme and ideology of the respective political parties rather people are blinded by their short term ends being met. What is important here is that the political class is also not interested in cultivating a political consciousness among the mass. It is so because that the ignorance of mass is instrumental in their political sustenance. Such a situation from the political studies point of view is anti-thesis of modern state however

in Anthropology in particular & Sociology in general it is entangled in familial & kinship ties. At a different conceptual plain, Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (2002: 5) have argued for a continuum like scenario between the clientelistic politics on one hand and democratic form of politics on the other as outlined in Table 1.

Kaufman (1974: 285) states that "[T]he patron-client relation is defined here as a special type of dyadic exchange, distinguishable by ..... the relationship occurs between actors of unequal power and status; it is based on the principle of reciprocity... the relationship is particularistic and private, anchored only loosely in public law or community norms." John Duncan Powell (1970) highlights three basic connotations of the concept: the patron-client relationship was characterized by (1) "two parties unequal in status, wealth, and influence;" (2) "the formation and maintenance of the relationship depends on reciprocity in the exchange of [non-comparable] goods and services;" and (3) "the development and maintenance of a patron-client relationship rests heavily on face-to-face contact between the two parties." René Lemarchand and Keith Legg (1972:149) have defined political clientelism as "a more or less personalized, affective, and reciprocal relationship between actors, or sets of actors, commanding unequal resources and involving mutually beneficial transactions that have political ramifications beyond the immediate sphere of dyadic relationships." Graziano while elaborating on clientelistic system states that it is characterised by "a highly individualistic type of political participation, weak legitimation of political leaders, a very fragmented pattern of allocation of political resources and, finally, a process of cooptation of opposition leaders by the party in power" (1976: 149). Thus, "the exchange of personalistic favours also served as a principal tool for electoral mobilization at the mass level" (Gunther and Diamond 2003: 176).

Jajmani System as a model of Clientele & Patronage Politics

The paper claims that the clientele & patronage politics stemmed mainly through *jajmani* system wherein the patron-client tie is maintained across successive generations i.e. the system of hereditary clientage in post-independent India.[2] In this way, the conventional sense of patron-client relationship can be located in the patronage practice of *jajmani* system which has been the core of the rural and peasant social order permeating the economic & materiality aspects of life along with the socio-religious aspects. Herein the entire gamut of local caste order is divided into two mutual caste groups i.e. *jajman* and *kamin*. The former is the patron castes group and the latter is often termed as serving castes having mutual commitment of each party towards the other. In this system of interaction, the *kamin* serve the *jajman* in lieu of the payment in cash and kind to have a decent livelihood resulting in an intricate & obligatory system studied as *jajmani* system by many a notable anthropologists and sociologists.[3]

The term *jajmani* was originally used in the anthropological literature by William Wiser in his work, *The Hindu Jajmani System* (1958 [1st edition 1936]). According to Wiser (1958: xviii), in the Indian village, "each caste...at some time during the year is expected to render a fixed type of service to each other caste."[4] He termed the services rendered as '*jajmani* services' and the payments as '*jajmani* payments'. Additively, for him the relations created by these services can be addressed as '*jajmani* ties' and the total of these relationships, the *jajmani* system. Wiser summarized his concept in the statement, "Each in turn is master; Each in turn is servant" (Wiser 1958: xxi). Another key anthropologist to elaborate upon the notion of *jajmani* system was Oscar Lewis. According to him, "…under this system each caste group within a village is expected to give certain standardised services to the families of other castes" (Lewis 1958: 55; Lewis and Barnouv 1967).

A brief note can be made on the 'usefulness' of the jajmani system in the continuance of patronage politics. It is so because caste has been and still is a paramount social reality in the Indian social order and its manifestation in day-to-day lives and it is through this institution, that the clienteles derive its sustenance. One can easily derive the point that with the advent of representative democracy, the dominant political party / leadership had to only get the patron i.e. landlord of the village to align to itself. The rest of the village community as is dependent on him for its needs, they follow in the line. One can also speak of 'vote-bank politics', a much ab(used) term in political discourse in India wherein caste/s & communities voted collectively to a specific political leader having similar caste background. In this regard, the role of caste associations in post-independent India has been also underlined by many social & political scientists in terms of "the politics of caste" (Rudolph and Rudolph, [1967] 2010: 64-87). Thus, the material relations between the *jajman* (patron) and the *kamin* (client) were more than often translated into political obligation wherein given the hierarchical relations between the two the *jajman* had the upper hand and thus was able to easily 'extract' the political mileage out of the latter.

Sites of Clientelistic & Patronage Politics in India: Continuity & Change

S.N. Eisenstadt and Luis Roniger in their 'foundational' text *Patrons, clients and friends: interpersonal relations and the structure of trust in society* (1984) have commented upon the unfolding of patron-client exposition in Indian political setup. According to them, "Members of non-dominant castes - village leaders for instance - join the networks of higher level politicians as dependents and clients and, in return for electoral support, are granted sources of patronage. Thus, the openness of the modern Indian political sphere, together with the existence of strong hierarchical structures, has fostered the emergence of such networks of political clientelism" (1984: 153). Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) while analysing "patronage-based, party-voter linkages" have outlined

three major reasons to study the clientele politics. Firstly, the new democracies of Latin America and South & Southeast Asia among other regions are marked by different scenario of citizen-politician linkages. Secondly, they point out that although in the beginning it was argued that the clientale politics has been seen as something to do with the traditional and transitional societies based on strong kinship ties and caste orientation. Yet, we find that this form of politics is still visible such societies which claim to be modern in their outlook. Thirdly, with the coming of globalization and emergence of Transnational Corporations / Companies (TNCs) & Multinational Corporations / Companies (MNCs), the power, authority and sovereignty of the State has been reduced and so has the influence of the political parties and political leaders. So, in this troublesome time, it is imperative for the latter that they invoke the primordial identities of the people so as to remain influential.

Similarly, Wilkinson (2014: 260-261) has highlighted three specific reasons of persistence of patron-client in the political arena of the post-independent India. According to him, "First, at independence, India lacked the governmental and political elements...; high levels of ethnic heterogeneity....; Third, the rising levels of political and electoral competition following independence have perpetuated rather than thwarted clientelism in the country." In the context of the first arguement, one is tempted to quote Manor who while writing on Rajni Kothari's notion of Congress as a "system" observes that "When it had dominated Indian politics, Congress — basing its power on regional party units which distributed patronage in exchange for electoral support — had to a limited extent homogenised the politics of various states" (Manor, 2013: xiv). Similar terrain of thought is also found in Atul Kohli's observation pertaining to Indian National Congress (INC) party that ".... this is what the party did, building long chains of patronage..... to cultivate the support of the patrons — generally the highest, landowning elite castes — who, in turn, could sway the political behaviour of their dependent clients, generally poor peasants" (Kohli 2009: 111).

In one of the earliest works on exploring the political aspects patron-client relationships in Indian rural & agrarian setup, Michie (1981) studied two Rajasthani villages which were Hanumangarh and Shivpura. During the course of study in the latter he found that "The headman is a master politician whose position rests on the control of resources such as agricultural loans, inputs, and other services coming into the village through the cooperative and block development offices. Farmers reciprocate votes and support for these benefits. The artisan and service groups are linked to him through more generalized ties, primarily through the provision of collective services such as schools and personal favors he is able to perform" (1981: 29). Inabanathan and Gopalappa in their study of three districts of Karnataka have also explored the incidences of patronage in local governance and have termed it as 'fixing' (2003: 164-185). Kanchan Chandra in her analysis of party politics in India in

general and Uttar Pradesh in particular in the context of support for the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) among Scheduled Castes speaks about 'patronage democracy' wherein "... the state monopolizes the access to jobs and services, and in which elected officials have individualized discretion in the implementation of policy distributing these jobs and services" (2004: 49). Markussen studied clientelism based on party membership at the level of local government in four South Indian states, namely Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. He concludes that "…the existence of party-based political clientelism is demonstrated empirically" and further that "in equal communities clientelism is unimportant, but in unequal communities it is pervasive" (Markussen 2011: 1375).

Sadanandan basing his study in Kerala has argued that "Decentralization advances patronage politics in distinct ways" primarily because "elected local politicians have individual strategies to distribute patronage" (2012: 223). Such finding has been corroborated by Dutta (2012) through his study of two Panchayat elections in Uttar Pradesh wherein the *Pradhan* (headman) nurtures factional politics at the local level through the appropriation of public resources and the dispensation of patronage so as to stake claim to power (2012: 330). Wyatt (2013) has analysed the strategies of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), the two leading political parties in Tamil Nadu to secure political mileage through 'distributing public resources' i.e. patronage politics and locate such strategies in 'material politics' framework. He observes that "clientelism remains a feature of politics in Tamil Nadu. Political parties engage in both vote buying and the distribution of public resources as patronage" (2013: 46). Berenschot while studying election campaign for a seat in Gujarat's state parliament interlinked the neighbourhood, political campaign and identity (caste & religion) and emphasised on what he calls trust networks and observes that "These networks come with patterns of authority that can facilitate a clientelistic exchange of electoral support for access to state resources" (2015: 27). More recently Elliott has applied theory of clientelism viewing it as 'transactional politics' in the context of politics in Andhra Pradesh (AP) and has argued how with changing times, the political leaders are devising new techniques to get connected with their voters (Elliott 2016: 22-36). Based on her study the author points out that there is a shift in the approach of the political leadership towards individualistic patronage.

In contradiction to the basic tenets of post-clientelistic form of politics and democracy, the present paper argues that even in the contemporary times, the political ideology and its practice in many developing countries including India is very much in tune with clientele and/or patronage politics. It is so because even though the India is a modern state and has a vibrant party politics based democracy, still one sees the vestiges of patron-client relationship in political sphere more than often. What is more important to note that

sometimes the state itself survives through the same. To quote Eric Wolf, "The solution adopted by many a modernizing society enmeshed in such many stranded network of relations has been to replace the individual patrons with centralized patronage-dispensing institutions of the state. By granting patronage rights to major bureaucratic entities, such states have worked to substitute the tie between state and citizen for the personalized alliance between particular patrons and their clients" (1966: 94-95). What Wolf foresaw about modernizing societies in general nearly four decades ago, Chandra has reiterated the similar in case of neo-liberal India that "the patronage-based relationship between the state and the private sector has remained in place" (2015: 46). The earlier system of patron-client has been reshuffled due to the entry of the market in a forceful way and the withdrawal of the state in some of its domain.

Again, patronage politics can be seen as a "transformed" form of 'patron-client' relations as being practiced in the 'traditional' rural & agrarian spaces in India. Such a transition in its nature & scope has been eloquently outlined by Suri for whom "As old hierarchical ties have declined or largely broken down in urban and rural localities, politicians now mobilize support through the direct exchange of material benefits for the votes of social groups and individuals" (2013: 241-242). Thus, the process of clientelistic exchange in the political activities is primarily manifested through the way in which politicians transfer resources to their clients through local leaders in the local elections to the individual or group-based voters. The political candidate/s can also offer immediate gifts of money, food and sometimes liquor to the 'prospective' voters. A new political class of people has emerged invariably addressed as political fixers, political entrepreneurs, political middlemen, etc. who "are intermediaries who use political contacts and knowledge of official procedures to help India's citizens, particularly the poor, deal with state institutions" (Berenschot 2011: 382). Over a period of time, some of them politically mature as "'boss', 'lord' and 'captain'" providing "leadership over different types of political domains" (Price and Ruud 2010: xxiv).

Furthermore, the 'political clients' are also offered regular access to the government development projects, employment, and educational opportunities. It has been argued that democratic institutions are very different from clientelistic ones as the former focuses on the production and open transfer of public goods. Herein there will not be any kind of obligation on either part (political leaders and parties on one hand and mass in general on the other) for support and vote. In this way, the political behaviour will be strictly political in nature. It sometimes involves gifts or money at various religious & familial ceremonies by the respective political leaders. In recent times with the increase in the public budget for development works which now most of time are contractual in nature and its recruitment of labour force depends heavily on the contractor itself; the clientelistic politics also has taken route of 'awarding

/ gifting' employment affiliations sometimes along the kinship lines. Such a symbiotic political relationship between the political leaders (elites), middlemen and people in general results in a unique strategy of gaining political support by these individuals or parties through the distribution of individual or collective goods to prospective voters. It may also include the distribution of state resources by office holders. To understand such a transformation, we again need to go back to the classical article by Scott (1972: 91-113) wherein he had argued that, "The dynamics of electoral competition trans-formed patron-client relations in at least four important ways: (1) it improved the client's bargaining position with a patron by adding to his resources; (2) it promoted the vertical integration of patron-client structures from the hamlet level to the central government; (3) it led to the creation of new patron-client pyramids and the politicization of old ones; and (4) it contributed to the survival of opposition patron-client pyramids at the local level." Here it is important to note that the practice of political patronage includes distribution of individual or collective "favors" by a political party which is in governmental power position and uses the resources of the state to gain votes and political support.

One can point out another source of patronage politics which is the inherent nature of the neo-liberal state and the bureaucratic structure of the post 1990s India. Seen through the lens of the large mass of people who still are semi-literate both in the literal sense as well as the inability to 'understand' state; the State manifests itself through the Weberian notion of bureaucracy based on certain rules and regulations. It is pertinent to point out here that the state appears to be a distant reality to the common mass and thus it finds it difficult to approach the 'faceless and formless' state apparatus. The only entry point is the bureaucracy who is modernized social structure characterized by 'bounded rationality'. It is in this context that the political elite and leadership acts as a conduit between these two seemingly 'distant' points. It extracts its price from the commoners through political vote and support. Gradually, there emerges a client-patron relationship between the mass on one hand and the political elite on the other. It can be also mentioned here that given the wide spread of poverty as well as unemployment, the mass votes and supports its 'patron' with its consent.

Needless to say, the beneficiaries to such and other schemes have to interact with the state officials and had to fill up various application forms and to get them attested by the gazette officials and to get the witness signatures on important documents. As majority of the population in is still in peasant class and agriculture is the main stay of their economy, illiterate along with those who have a basic level of literacy are unaware of various such schemes. They need & seek someone to help them out and guide through the thick mazes of official discourse. To guide them the practice of patron-client comes very handy. Additively at this juncture, the role of the local power-brokers becomes very much important. These act as intermediaries in helping

the largely peasant (agrarian and uneducated and/or educated only till primary/ secondary levels) electorate in numerous ways (primarily in the context of jobs and employment, favorable treatment from the bureaucrats and state officials, etc.). Most importantly, they negotiate their encounters (which are sometimes unhelpful & uncooperative on the part of the officials) with the local authorities, officials and bureaucrats. Such power-brokers sometimes also manage to convince the potential supporters with jobs in the public sector.

To quote Abercrombie and Hill in the above context, "The form that brokerage typically takes is political. The urban poor need all kinds of help which existing institutions do not provide effectively and, in societies with representative democracy, they have a valuable asset to trade for help, namely, their vote. Help in dealing with local bureaucracies over matters of sanitation, health and public utilities, help in finding employment in local government, and financial aid in times of sickness or unemployment are all services which a political broker with power in local (or national) administration may provide in return for votes" (1976: 424-425). Robinson & Verdier (2013: 262) highlight that "Clientelism is a political exchange: a politician (i.e. a "patron") gives patronage in exchange for the vote or support of a "client". The dominant stylized fact in this body of literature is that, in clientelism, it is jobs that are exchanged for votes." Thus, main task of such middle-men is to facilitate the distribution of particularistic goods and favors to the supporters (or potential supporters) towards the political parties the former are attached to.

It can be argued that the clientale & patronage politics in India oscillates between traditional *Jajmani* relationships on one hand and the emergence of political middlemen ('fixers') in the modern political setup giving rise to a new set of relations on the other. As the vast rural and semi-urban mass still lacks what Almond and Verba have conceptualized as 'civic culture', there emerges a tiny fraction of individuals who act as intermediaries between them and the local level political leaders which again are aligned at the national level. These three variables interlink to each other through available state resources (i.e. governmental welfare programmes) to be distributed among the people so that the political leaders can assure the continuance of their political power & rule. Since, these intermediaries are also affiliated to different political party programmes, a kind of political "return" for such kind of assistance is guaranteed by the beneficiaries or the prospective electorate. For instance, to avail benefits under government welfare programmes and policies, paperwork needs to be done. Those who are ignorant to the functioning of bureaucracy or are put off by the 'cold' attitude of the authority find it a cumbersome job. In addition to it, depending on the feasibility of the reasons, access to the local level political representative is also guarded and/ or facilitated by these middlemen. The available literature thus points to a thriving patron-client relationship in the modern, democratic & neo-liberal party politics.

Conclusion

The nature of polity and political economy in the post-independent India has undergone a sea change in its outlook. Gone are the times of the hegemony of the single political party though the same was enmeshed in the multi-party democratic system. Since last two-three decades we see a kind of vibrant political tussle for claiming the power at regional & national levels. At the same time, we witness the broadening and deepening of the democratic ethos both at the ends of political parties and their respective programme politics on one hand and the voters on the other hand. Needless to say, the process of political participation has been and still is mediated through the socio-cultural and spatial categories of village community, caste system and joint family. Related with the gradual maturity of the Indian democracy, is the notion of the emergence of modern Indian nation-state and its attempt to follow the 'modern' (read 'western') imagery of democracy and related processes. As a consequence of which there emerged a strong sense of dissatisfaction with the ways in which politics was being done in the post-colonial India. The categories of joint family and its extension the kin-group on one hand and the caste on the other became points of critique as these were seen to 'deviate' the modern, rational voter to see through the party programme politics. The 'naïve' voter was still under the spell of caste and kin group obligations displaying the traditionalism in its outlook. It was seen to be anti-thesis to the desired process of political modernization. Following the intellectual & academic footsteps of the modernization theory, we charted off to build a 'new' political discourse undermining traditional & patrimonial ties & identities. In such an ideal scenario the respective political party will have its programme i.e. manifesto transparently articulated and the voter devoid of its 'primordial identity' & 'interest' will vote for the best suited. In addition to it, the political leader was not to utilize the state resources to induce the voters in his/ her favour. However, the present paper has attempted to locate the Indian polity within the framework of patron-client relationship. The paper argues that the vestiges of clientale & patronage politics still cling around the political process at micro levels either during the times of election campaigning and / or distribution of the public state goods by the elected political leaders to the mass in general. With the help of various empirical studies the paper states that the public goods are not distributed among the mass as something 'free', rather these carry a significant instrumental value i.e. political support and vote. The political leader as a patron in the classic sense enters into an exchange relationship with the mass in general i.e. clients in the classical sense. The material exchange between the two flows from the patron to the client owing to the superior material status of the former whereas the latter 'returns' the gestures through its political commitment. The paper also looked at the *jajmani* system as one of the models of clientale & patronage politics in India which in a way was responsible for the emergence of Congress as a 'System'. Here we see that the shared caste identity of both the parties is of

pertinent importance which later on manifested in 'politicization' of caste and 'vote bank' politics.

With the emergence of the neo-liberal Indian state post 1990s, we see another political transformation in the democratic setup & practice. It was during that time that it dawned upon the political analysts that the days of absolute hegemony of a single political party are never to come back again as there was proliferation & subsequent increased assertion of the regional political parties. Coupled with this change was the entry of market through the international organizations which on one hand restricted the state's entry into its domain and started negotiating the regional power players on their own. The nation-state was reduced to play the role of referee. As a consequence of these two and other variables, the public goods were made available to the political leaders to guarantee the increased shelf life of their politics. Such a process was mediated through a new category of political fixers and middlemen. Finally a word of caution, the paper does not completely disowns the merit and importance of the democratic setup both at the national and regional levels wherein the citizen as 'political animal' engages with others in debates regarding party & programme politics and takes politically informed decisions; still we cannot ignore the strands of patronage politics in the neo-liberal political discourse of contemporary modern India of the post 1990s. This summarizes the core argument of the paper.

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NOTES

1. Also see Steffen W. Schmidt, Laura Guasti, Carl H. Lande, and James C. Scott (eds.) *Friends, followers, and factions: a reader in political clientelism*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1979. Susan C. Stokes, "Political Clientelism," in Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes (eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2009. Pp. 604-627.

2. Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond (2003: 176) state that "Such relationships are most common in rural, premodern societies: under conditions of geographical isolation from a dominant centre of government, coupled with low levels of functional literacy and poorly developed transportation and communications media, a localized patron–client relationship can be mutually beneficial to both the patron and the client."

3. The amount of scholarship devoted to the study of *Jajmani* system is overwhelming and impossible to list here in its entirety. For details see Gould, Harold A. 1958. "The Hindu Jajmani system: a case of economic particularism," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 14: 428-437. Beidelman, T.O. 1959. *A comparative analysis of the jajmani system*. Locust Valley: New York. Gough, E.K. 1960. "The Hindu Jajmani System," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 9(1): 83-91. Rao, M.S.A., 1961. "The

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4.   Also see Wiser, William, and Wiser, Charlotte. 1971. *Behind Mud Walls*. University of California Press: Berkeley.

Table 1
Continuum of Political/Decision making Systems

Clientelistic	Democratic
Authority is personal, resides with individuals.	Authority is institutional, resides with official roles.
Personal enrichment and aggrandizement are core values.	Rule of law, fair elections and majority rule are core values
Leaders tend to monopolize power and are unaccountable for their actions	Leaders share power with others and are accountable for actions
Leaders' relationship to supporters is opaque and may be unreliable	Leaders' relationship to supporters is transparent and is predictable
No regular procedures exist regarding leaders' replacement	Regular procedures exist regarding leaders' replacement
Leaders hold onto power by providing personal favors that secure loyalty of key followers	Leaders hold onto power by providing collective benefits that earn support of large segments of society
Policy decisions are taken in secret without public discussion or involvement	Policy decisions are taken in the open after public discussion and review
Political parties are organized around personalities	Political parties are organized around stated programs
Civil society is fragmented and characterized by vertical links	Civil society is deep and characterized by horizontal links
Decision making standards are tacit and procedures are impossible to follow from outside	Decision making standards are explicit and procedures are transparent
Supporters' interests guide decisions	Public interest guides decisions
Extensive scope exists for patronage appointments	Limited exists scope for patronage

Source: Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (2002: 5)

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