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Q8(c)

Illustrate with examples how regional parties in India have played a crucial role in drawing the historically disadvantaged groups into the mainstream political system

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · PSIR GS 1 · 15 marks · Political Theory

Political Theory: meaning and approaches.

Core demand of the question

- Illustrate how regional parties have drawn historically disadvantaged groups into mainstream politics
- Use BSP, DMK, TMC, TRS/BRS, AAP, and JMM as examples
- **Show mechanisms:** tickets, welfare, dignity, and coalition bargains
- Avoid a mere party catalogue

Revision summary

Regional parties have been decisive vehicles for bringing historically disadvantaged groups into governing politics, not only into vote banks.

The BSP made Dalit bahun power executive in Uttar Pradesh; the DMK mainstreamed non-Brahmin and Tamil publics through Dravidian organisation and welfare.

TMC incorporated rural poor, women, and minorities as the decisive Bengal coalition after the Left.

TRS/BRS turned a backward region's dignity claim into a state elite; AAP incorporated urban and agrarian users of public services; JMM brought Adivasi demands into Jharkhand's party government.

Jaffrelot's silent revolution and Yadav's democratic upsurges describe this incorporation, which creates new elites even as it opens the system.

Introduction

National parties did not monopolise the incorporation of the historically disadvantaged. Regional parties, closer to a language, a caste federation, or a state's poor, have often been the vehicles that turned those groups into coalition-makers rather than into occasional vote banks. The illustrations asked for - BSP, DMK, TMC, TRS/BRS, AAP, and JMM - show different pathways of the same process: bringing the excluded into the mainstream political system.

Body

Caste and language as doors

The **Bahujan Samaj Party**, built by **Kanshi Ram** and led in office by **Mayawati**, made Dalits not only a reserved electorate but a ruling formation in Uttar Pradesh. Symbolism (**Ambedkar** parks), tickets to Dalit candidates beyond tokenism, and a bahujan coalition theory pulled a

historically stigmatised majority-of-the-oppressed into the chief minister's chair. That is mainstreaming in the hardest sense: the state executive.

The **DMK**, from the Dravidian movement of **Periyar** and **C. N. Annadurai** through **Karunanidhi** and after, folded non-Brahmin and later intermediate-caste publics, and a Tamil linguistic nationality, into a stable party system. Reservations, midday meals as a later Dravidian welfare signature, and control of Chennai ended the idea that Madras politics was an English-Brahmin conversation. Disadvantage here was caste-linguistic. The DMK's federal bargains in New Delhi then carried that public into national coalitions.

Poverty, region, and tribe

Trinamool Congress under **Mamata Banerjee** displaced a long Left Front by speaking to rural poor, women as scheme-recipients, and minorities who felt politically homeless. Whatever the critiques of populism, TMC's machine made those groups decisive in West Bengal's mainstream, not clients of a distant politburo.

Telangana Rashtra Samithi, now **Bharat Rashtra Samithi**, channelled a regional dignity claim of an interior, often backward, Telangana against a coastal Andhra development story. Backward castes and a regional intelligentsia entered a new state's founding elite. Mainstreaming here was territorial: a disadvantaged region became a government.

Aam Aadmi Party pulled tenants and public-service users in Delhi, and a farmer-poor mix in Punjab, into government through subsidised goods - class disadvantage in a post-caste idiom. The **Jharkhand Mukti Morcha** made Adivasi land the core of a governing state party. **Jaffrelot's** silent revolution names this incorporation: new elites arise, but who may sit at the table has changed.

Flow diagram

Disadvantaged groups -> Regional parties
Regional parties -> Dalit executive
Regional parties -> Dravidian caste-language
Regional parties -> Poor women minorities
Regional parties -> Regional hinterland
Regional parties -> Public-goods users
Regional parties -> Adivasi statehood

Conclusion

Regional parties have drawn Dalits, Dravidian non-Brahmins, Bengal's poor and minorities, Telangana's hinterland, Delhi's users of public goods, and Jharkhand's Adivasis into governing majorities and national bargains. The mechanism is recognition plus organisation plus, often, welfare. That is how disadvantage becomes mainstream politics rather than remaining a social fact without a party name.

Facts & figures

BSP in Uttar Pradesh

Mayawati's chief ministerships demonstrated Dalit-led executive power inside India's largest state party system.

DMK and Dravidian reservations

Dravidian parties institutionalised backward-caste reservation and Tamil public identity as the normal grammar of Tamil Nadu politics.

JMM and Jharkhand

A tribal movement party became a repeated governing force in a state created for Adivasi and hinterland claims.

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