



Democracy Among Leadership in Indian Politics

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Introduction:-

The journey of India's democracy began in 1950, with a great promise to secure to all its citizens social, economic and political justice, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, and equality of status and opportunity. Democratic governance, the term recently added to the vocabulary of politics, signifies more than what the two words signify separately. India is the seventh largest (by area) and the second most populous country in the world, with roughly one-sixth of its population, of about a billion and a quarter. It is the world's largest democracy.. The country has three main national parties: the Indian National Congress (INC), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPIM). The Indian National Congress has governed the country for three-fourth of the time since Independence from Britain in 1947, under the *de facto* one party system and now, under the dominant-party system in a coalition government. At the level of its states, many regional parties stand for elections to state legislatures, every five years. The success of democracy in India defies many prevailing theories. Indian democracy is best understood by focusing on how power is distributed.¹⁾

Many democracies, particularly in developing countries, face problems with regard to the personal background of some politicians. The world's largest democracy, India, is only one example. In 2014, a year where we possess reliable data, roughly 34% of the recently elected members of the lower house of the Indian parliament faced pending criminal charges. A significant share of the Members of Parliament (MPs) is accused of serious criminal acts ranging from rape to murder. The Indian and international media have reported on this issue, and it is widely believed that it poses a threat to the Indian democracy in general and the constituencies represented by those individuals specifically. While these problems supposedly exist in a wide range of countries worldwide, the unavailability of data has impeded analysis of their consequences.²⁾

Key Words: - Introduction, Objectives, Electoral Competition, Attendance rates and parliamentary activity, Groups and caste-based parties, Political Power, Rural Leadership, Crisis of Leadership, Crisis of Leadership, Political Parties, Pressure Groups and Democratic Politics, Conclusion.



Objectives:-

- To ensure that people at the grass root level.
- To change in the human and physical environment.
- To achieve power but are denied the opportunity to do so through standard means.

Electoral Competition:-

We control for the closeness of electoral races in constituencies with the winning margin in terms of the difference in the vote share received by a MP and the immediate runner-up in 2004. Moreover, we code a constituency as a party stronghold if the political party of the winning candidate has won elections in that constituency for the last three successive elections in 1996, 1998 and 1999. We also employ a dummy variable for constituencies reserved for candidates from Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The number of voters proxies for constituency size, which Aidt et al. (2011) relate to the likelihood that criminals can intimidate a significant share of voters. The resulting maximum sample size for our estimations varies between 395 and 439. This variation is caused by three reasons. First, MPs changing during a term period due to various causes: a MP may be promoted to a ministerial or other superior position at the state level, they might make a planned resignation within the period, they could be expelled from office, or they might die. We carefully check each of these cases with information from the election commission of India and exclude all changes.³⁾

Attendance rates and parliamentary activity:-

Table 3 displays the relationship between our main variable of interest and attendance rates. The coefficient of Criminal (a) Is -0.046 , which is significant at the 10%-level in column 1, when controlling for state and party dummies only. The coefficient becomes slightly more negative in columns 2 and 3 when we add controls for electoral competitiveness and monitoring intensity, and is significant at the 5%-level. This indicates that omitting the two categories leads to a slightly upwardly biased coefficient. The coefficient changes marginally to -0.043 when including candidate characteristics and remains significant. Using our alternative and more stringent measure Criminal (b) Which should alleviate measurement error problems in identifying criminal types, confirms and strengthens the existing results? The coefficient for Criminal (c) Increases in absolute size from about -0.05 to about 0.13 , relating to 13 percentage points lower attendance rates for those with a criminal background (column 9–12). A classification of crimes is in our opinion highly arbitrary and the consequences of committing different types of crimes are theoretically unclear.



Groups and caste-based parties:-

To a large extent, the presence of its political allies has aided this process and the BJP has gained a foothold in new territories. The growing expansion of the BJP has been, as an analyst comments, ‘intertwined with a distinct three-tiered growth in its social appeal’⁴

The first tier growth involves the growing success of the BJP in extending its sphere of influence beyond its traditional support base of upper-caste Hindus. In the Hindi heartland, apart from its core support base – the upper castes – the only other community that has been mobilized in this region is ‘the scheduled tribe’. The second tier consists of the OBCs, which was another significant community that voted for the BJP presumably because of its poll alliance with those regional parties with strong organizational presence in those states. Here the alliance with these parties allowed the BJP to strike roots among the OBCs, which had so far remained peripheral in its agenda. The first victim of ‘this confluence of lower caste mobilization and regional assertion [has been] the dominance of the Congress at the state-level’

Political Power:-

The fate of a politician ultimately lies at the ballot box. Being the origin of power, the people know that even the strongest; the Prime Minister cannot have things entirely his own way. Under a Parliamentary type, leadership is glaring because of the virtue of its legislative collaboration. The Parliamentary Executive is continuously and more or less effectively responsible to the legislature for all its policies and acts. Thus the leader is a man of representative opinion possessing foresight, integrity and character.

The role of a leader in public administration is significant. Planning or preparation for any action whatever is the most important administrative function of the leader. Policy-formulation itself is a kind of planning. Its implementation too involves planning. The leader is responsible for the supervision and control of the entire set up. Co-ordination is one of the most important functions of the leader. Conflicts and difference within the organization, if they cannot be harmonized at the lower levels, have to be resolved, in the last resort by the Leader who has the highest authority to do so. The leader has to manage public relations of his organization.⁵⁾

Rural Leadership:-

Panchayati Raj is accepted as a way life to-day in India under the local self Government. An attractive name like “Decentralization” seems to attract popular imagination. The birth of Panchayati Raj has necessitated self-management of the problems of the community, a sense of popular participation and the political education of the villager in the citizenship of his country. The success of Panchayati Raj and the fulfillment of the hopes of people’s participation and involvement in the development work in the villages depend largely upon effective local leadership. “No country can



hope to achieve good working democracy let alone a Welfare State without a strong and healthy system of local Government” (Robson, 1966). Again, no local Government can remain healthy unless it is liable to change needed to adapt it to change in the human and physical environment.⁶⁾ The leader must be capable of stimulating and vitalizing others. Consequently, satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment are secured by the followers of the true leader. The leader can arouse popular enthusiasm and local initiative in public service, the lack of which were the chronic maladies of the system.

Crisis of Leadership:-

It is common place to say that India faces a crisis of leadership, The shortage of leadership is a result of the absence of social conditions and arrangements which would promote potential leaders. Thus it becomes urgent to think of the processes, problems and influences that shape the emergence of new leaders. Leadership is as urgent a social problem in India as the paucity of economic resources, technical know-how and trained bureaucrats. The problem assumes greater significance as the leadership is expected to undertake the triple responsibility of strengthening democratic institutions in a mass society, of modernizing the masses and of initiating and performing developmental work.⁷⁾ The role of political leadership in India has an added significance as the people look to the state as an agency of social change. The dependence on state initiative to undertake any new programme or policy is noticeable even at the lowest level. Thus those who would yield political power have to be initiators in social change. Is the leadership capable of shouldering the responsibility? On the quality of men will depend the answer?

Political Parties, Pressure Groups and Democratic Politics:-

You will recall that this chapter began with the oft quoted definition of democracy as a form of government that is of the people, by the people and for the people. As the chapter unfolded you would have noticed how this definition captures the spirit of democracy but conceals the many divisions between one group of people and another. You have seen how interests and concerns are different. We have seen in section II on the Indian Constitution how different groups sought to represent their interests within the Constituent Assembly. We also saw in the story of Indian democracy the contending interests of different groups. A look at the newspaper every morning will show you many instances where different groups seek to make their voices heard. And draw the attention of the government to their grievances.⁸⁾

The question, however, arises whether all interest groups are comparable. Can an illiterate peasant or literate worker make her case to the government as coherently and convincingly as an industrialist? Neither the industrialist nor the peasant or worker, however, represents their case as individuals. In a democratic form of government political parties are key actors. A political party may be defined as an organisation oriented towards achieving legitimate control of government through an electoral



process. Political Party is an organisation established with the aim of achieving governmental power and using that power to pursue a specific programme. Political parties are based on certain understanding of society and how it ought to be. In a democratic system the interests of different groups are also represented by political parties, who take up their case.

Conclusion:-

Democratic decentralization of power and responsibility to the people's representatives at local levels has resulted in reorientation of the administrative outlook and organization in inter-relationship. But still certain strains in the pattern of adjustments are noticeable. Leadership based on the tradition of sacrifice, dedication and austerity would be replaced by the new leaders who represent their hold on their regions, either due to caste or interest group support. Really speaking the problem of substituting the tradition of sacrifice and dedication by a tradition of specialization is the basic-issue. Specialization means more material cost but more specialized knowledge of political organization and administrative skills.

References:-

1. The author is an Associate Professor of Economics at the Department of Economics of University of Kalyani, Kalyani, West Bengal, India. His contact email id is byasdeb@gmail.com. The author likes to thank the participants and commentators at the International Conference on *A World to repair. Is democratizing democracy an illusion?* held during 18th and 19th October 2012 at Paris – especially Rada Ivekovic, Orazio Irrera and Goran Fegic.
2. See:<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/news/Every-third-newly-elected-MP-has-criminal-background/articleshow/35306963.cms?>. The members of the 16th Lok Sabha were elected during the 2014 national elections held between 7th April and 12th May 2014. The 16th Lok Sabha commenced on 4th June 2014. The situation has not changed significantly based on newer data. (accessed between March and November 2013).
3. http://eci.nic.in/archive/GE2004/States/index_fs.htm(accessed between September and December 2014).
4. Ibid.
5. Art. 40 The State Shall Take Steps to Organize Village Panchayats and Endow Them with Such Powers and Authority as May Be Necessary to Enable Them to Function as Units of Self-Government.
6. I bid.
7. V M Sirsikar Political Leadership in India P-517.
8. The Story of Indian Democracy.2015-16 P- 51.