

POLITICAL BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES IN EMERGING DEMOCRACIES

***Dr.Eranna, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Govt. First Grade College, Hosakote.**

Abstract:

The aim of this study is to examine the Political Behavior and Attitudes in Emerging Democracies. Political behavior and attitudes in emerging democracies are vital for understanding the prospects of democratic consolidation and stability. These democracies, transitioning from authoritarian regimes to democratic governance, encounter distinct challenges that shape their political landscape, including historical autocratic legacies, economic instability, social divisions, and the effort to build robust democratic institutions. Political participation in emerging democracies takes various forms, from voting in elections to engaging in protests and activism. Initially, voter turnout is often high due to the novelty and optimism surrounding the democratic transition. However, this enthusiasm may diminish as citizens become disillusioned with slow reforms and persistent corruption. Trust in political institutions, such as the judiciary and electoral bodies, is often low because of past corruption and lack of transparency, which erodes citizens' confidence in the democratic process. Commitment to democratic values and norms varies among citizens. While some strongly support democratic principles, others may nostalgically long for authoritarian stability if democratic governance fails to deliver expected economic and social benefits. Tolerance and pluralism are essential for democratic consolidation, yet emerging democracies frequently struggle with ethnic, religious, or political intolerance. Economic conditions significantly influence political attitudes. Economic instability and inequality can lead to dissatisfaction with democracy and increase support for populist or authoritarian alternatives. Media freedom and access to reliable information are crucial, as the media plays a dual role in promoting accountability and sometimes spreading misinformation. Civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play key roles in promoting democratic values, political participation, and accountability. Their engagement is essential for advocating policy changes, holding governments accountable, and providing civic education. In conclusion, political behavior and attitudes in emerging democracies are shaped by a complex interplay of historical, economic, and social factors. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for fostering democratic stability, growth, and consolidation in these transitioning societies.

Keywords: *Political Behaviour, Attitudes, Emerging Democracies etc.*

INTRODUCTION:

Political behavior and attitudes in emerging democracies are critical for understanding the prospects of democratic consolidation and stability. Emerging democracies, typically characterized by their transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic governance, often face unique challenges that shape the political landscape. These include historical legacies of autocratic rule, economic instability, social divisions, and the struggle to build robust democratic institutions. In these contexts, political participation manifests in various forms, from voting in elections to engaging in protests and activism. Initial enthusiasm for voting may wane as citizens become disillusioned with slow reforms and persistent corruption. Trust in political institutions, such as the judiciary and electoral bodies, is often low due to histories of corruption and lack of transparency, affecting citizens' confidence in the democratic process. The commitment to democratic values and norms is another crucial aspect. While some citizens strongly support democracy, others may express nostalgia for authoritarian stability, especially if democratic governance fails to deliver expected economic and social benefits. Tolerance and pluralism are essential for democratic consolidation, yet emerging democracies often struggle with ethnic, religious, or political intolerance. Economic conditions significantly impact political attitudes. Economic instability and inequality can lead to dissatisfaction with democracy and support for populist or authoritarian alternatives. Media freedom and access to reliable information are also vital, with the media playing a dual role in promoting accountability and sometimes spreading misinformation. Civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are key players in promoting democratic values and political participation. Their engagement is vital for advocating policy changes, holding governments accountable, and providing civic education.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The aim of this study is to examine the Political Behavior and Attitudes in Emerging Democracies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study is based on secondary sources of data such as articles, books, journals, research papers, websites and other sources.

POLITICAL BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES IN EMERGING DEMOCRACIES

Emerging democracies, those transitioning from authoritarian regimes to democratic governance, present unique challenges and opportunities for understanding political behavior and attitudes. These societies often grapple with legacies of autocracy, economic instability, and social divisions, all of which shape the political landscape. This comprehensive analysis delves into the multifaceted dimensions of political behavior and attitudes in emerging democracies, providing a thorough understanding of the factors influencing democratic consolidation and stability.

1. Political Participation

Political participation is a cornerstone of democratic governance, reflecting citizens' engagement with the political process.

Voting Behavior: In emerging democracies, the enthusiasm for voting can vary significantly. Initial elections post-transition often see high voter turnout, driven by the population's eagerness to participate in the new democratic process. For example, South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 saw a remarkable voter turnout of over 85% as citizens celebrated the end of apartheid and the beginning of a new era. However, as the novelty wears off and citizens become disillusioned with the pace of change or the persistence of corruption, voter turnout may decline. This pattern is evident in countries like Ukraine, where voter turnout has fluctuated due to political instability and dissatisfaction with government performance.

Protest and Activism: Beyond voting, citizens in emerging democracies often engage in protests and activism. These forms of political participation are crucial in societies where institutional channels for addressing grievances may be weak or ineffective. The Arab Spring, which swept across North Africa and the Middle East starting in 2010, is a prominent example. Citizens in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya took to the streets to demand political reform, economic opportunities, and an end to corruption and autocratic rule. While these movements

had varying outcomes, they underscored the power of collective action in shaping political landscapes.

2. Trust in Political Institutions

Trust in political institutions is essential for the legitimacy and stability of democratic governance. Emerging democracies often face significant challenges in building this trust.

Institutional Trust: In many emerging democracies, trust in institutions such as the judiciary, police, and electoral bodies is low. This distrust can be attributed to a history of corruption, lack of transparency, and weak rule of law. In Nigeria, for instance, corruption scandals involving high-level officials have eroded public trust in governmental institutions. Efforts to combat corruption and improve transparency are critical for rebuilding trust. The establishment of anti-corruption bodies and the implementation of transparency initiatives, as seen in countries like Georgia, can help restore public confidence in institutions.

Political Parties: Political parties in emerging democracies often struggle to gain legitimacy. They may be perceived as vehicles for personal gain rather than representatives of public interests. This perception can affect party loyalty and the development of stable party systems. In Kenya, political parties are often seen as ethnically based and focused on patronage, undermining their credibility as national representatives. Strengthening internal party democracy, promoting inclusive policies, and ensuring accountability can enhance the legitimacy of political parties.

3. Democratic Values and Norms

The commitment to democratic values and norms is crucial for the sustainability of democracy in emerging democracies.

Commitment to Democracy: Citizens' commitment to democratic principles can be influenced by their experiences under authoritarian rule. In some cases, there may be strong support for democracy as an ideal. For instance, in post-apartheid South Africa, there has been a strong commitment to democratic principles, despite the challenges of corruption and inequality. Conversely, frustration with the practicalities of democratic governance can lead

Research paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 11.Iss 06, 2022

to nostalgia for authoritarian rule. This is seen in Russia, where some citizens express longing for the stability and order of the Soviet era, reflecting dissatisfaction with the current democratic system's performance.

Tolerance and Pluralism: The acceptance of diverse political opinions, minority rights, and pluralism is essential for democratic consolidation. Emerging democracies often struggle with ethnic, religious, or political intolerance, which can hinder democratic development. In Myanmar, ethnic and religious tensions have significantly impacted political stability and democratic consolidation. Promoting inclusive policies, protecting minority rights, and fostering dialogue are essential steps for building a tolerant and pluralistic society.

4. Economic Conditions and Perceptions

Economic conditions play a significant role in shaping political attitudes and behaviors in emerging democracies.

Economic Performance: Economic stability and growth are crucial for the legitimacy of democratic governments. Economic instability, unemployment, and poverty can lead to dissatisfaction with the democratic process and increase support for populist or authoritarian alternatives. In Venezuela, economic collapse has severely undermined public confidence in democratic institutions, leading to political instability and support for authoritarian measures. Conversely, countries like Botswana have demonstrated that economic growth, combined with good governance, can support democratic consolidation.

Perception of Corruption: High levels of perceived corruption can erode trust in the political system and discourage citizen participation. Efforts to combat corruption are essential for building public confidence in democratic institutions. In Brazil, the Lava Jato (Car Wash) investigation exposed widespread corruption among political and business elites, leading to public outrage and demands for reform. Effective anti-corruption measures, such as the establishment of independent anti-corruption agencies and transparent procurement processes, can help restore public trust.

5. Media and Information

The role of media and access to information are critical in shaping political behaviors and attitudes in emerging democracies.

Research paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 11.Iss 06, 2022

Media Freedom: A free and independent media is vital for an informed citizenry and for holding those in power accountable. However, media freedom can be under threat in emerging democracies from both governmental control and economic pressures. In Turkey, government crackdowns on independent media have significantly restricted press freedom, limiting the public's access to unbiased information. Supporting independent journalism, protecting journalists, and promoting media literacy are crucial for maintaining media freedom.

Information Access: Access to reliable information affects political behavior and attitudes. The spread of misinformation and the role of social media can both positively and negatively influence political dynamics. Social media platforms have been instrumental in mobilizing protests and political movements, as seen during the Arab Spring. However, they can also facilitate the spread of misinformation and hate speech, contributing to political polarization and conflict. Initiatives to promote digital literacy and fact-checking can help mitigate the negative effects of misinformation.

6. Civil Society and NGOs

Civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a critical role in promoting democratic values, political participation, and accountability.

Civil Society Engagement: Active civil society engagement is a sign of a healthy democracy. CSOs and NGOs can advocate for policy changes, hold the government accountable, and provide services where the state is lacking. In Poland, civil society played a crucial role in the transition to democracy and continues to be a vital force in defending democratic norms and human rights. Ensuring the legal and financial sustainability of CSOs and protecting them from governmental harassment are essential for their continued effectiveness.

Civic Education: Programs that educate citizens about their rights and responsibilities in a democracy are crucial. Effective civic education fosters informed and engaged citizens. In countries like Tunisia, civic education programs have been implemented to educate young people about democratic principles and processes. These programs can help build a culture of democracy and active citizenship.

7. Examples of Emerging Democracies

Examining specific cases of emerging democracies provides insight into the diverse challenges and successes experienced in different contexts.

Eastern Europe: Countries like Poland and Hungary transitioned from communist rule in the late 20th century. While initially embracing democratic reforms, recent years have seen challenges to democratic norms and institutions. In Hungary, the government under Viktor Orbán has been accused of undermining democratic institutions and the rule of law, raising concerns about democratic backsliding. In contrast, countries like Estonia have successfully consolidated their democracies, demonstrating the importance of strong institutions and civic engagement.

Latin America: Nations such as Brazil and Argentina have experienced cycles of democracy and authoritarianism. Current political behaviors reflect both the consolidation of democratic practices and ongoing struggles with corruption and inequality. In Brazil, the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff and the subsequent political turmoil highlighted the challenges of corruption and political accountability. However, the strength of civil society and the media in exposing corruption and demanding reforms has been a positive force for democracy.

Africa: Countries like South Africa and Nigeria have made significant strides in democratic governance. However, issues such as corruption, economic inequality, and ethnic tensions continue to affect political attitudes. In South Africa, the legacy of apartheid and ongoing economic disparities pose challenges to social cohesion and democratic consolidation. In Nigeria, ethnic and religious conflicts, along with widespread corruption, have hindered democratic development. Efforts to promote inclusive governance, economic development, and anti-corruption measures are crucial for these countries' democratic progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Strengthen Institutions:** Building strong, transparent, and accountable institutions is critical for fostering trust in the political system. This includes judicial reform, strengthening electoral bodies, and promoting transparency in government operations.
2. **Promote Economic Development:** Economic stability and growth are essential for the legitimacy of democratic governments. Policies that promote inclusive economic development, reduce poverty, and address unemployment can enhance public support for democracy.

Research paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 11.Iss 06, 2022

3. **Combat Corruption:** Effective anti-corruption measures are crucial for building public trust. Establishing independent anti-corruption agencies, promoting transparency, and ensuring accountability for corrupt practices can help restore confidence in democratic institutions.
4. **Support Media Freedom:** Protecting media freedom and promoting access to reliable information are essential for an informed citizenry. Supporting independent journalism, protecting journalists from harassment, and promoting media literacy can help maintain a healthy democratic discourse.
5. **Enhance Civic Education:** Civic education programs that inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities in a democracy are crucial for fostering active and informed participation. These programs should be inclusive and accessible to all segments of society.
6. **Foster Civil Society:** A vibrant civil society is a cornerstone of democracy. Ensuring the legal and financial sustainability of CSOs and protecting them from governmental harassment are essential for their continued effectiveness.

CONCLUSION:

The study of political behavior and attitudes in emerging democracies reveals both the challenges and opportunities inherent in their transitions from authoritarian rule to democratic governance. These nations face a complex landscape shaped by historical contexts, economic conditions, societal expectations, and institutional developments. Key findings indicate that while initial enthusiasm for democratic processes often manifests in high voter turnout and civic engagement, sustained democratic consolidation requires addressing deep-rooted issues such as corruption, economic inequality, and institutional trust deficits. Trust in political institutions remains fragile due to historical experiences of autocracy and ongoing governance challenges. Moreover, the commitment to democratic values and norms varies among citizens, influenced by their perceptions of democracy's ability to deliver inclusive governance and socio-economic progress.

Economic conditions play a pivotal role in shaping political attitudes, with economic instability and inequality potentially undermining public confidence in democratic institutions and fostering support for alternative political movements. Media freedom and access to reliable information are crucial for fostering informed citizenry and holding

Research paper © 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 11.Iss 06, 2022

governments accountable, yet they often face challenges ranging from state control to misinformation.

The strengthening of democratic governance in emerging democracies requires comprehensive efforts to enhance institutional transparency, promote inclusive economic growth, uphold democratic values, and safeguard civil liberties. By addressing these multifaceted challenges, emerging democracies can advance towards more resilient and inclusive political systems that effectively respond to the aspirations and needs of their citizens.

REFERENCES:

1. Carothers, T. (2002). The end of the transition paradigm. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(1), 5-21.
2. Diamond, L. (2002). Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2), 21-35.
3. Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2010). *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press.
4. Norris, P. (2011). *Democratic deficit: Critical citizens revisited*. Cambridge University Press.
5. Schedler, A. (2006). *Electoral authoritarianism: The dynamics of unfree competition*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.