

New Political Trends In India: Party Politics, Growing Corporate Interventions And The Role Of Media

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Abstract:

In the past 25 years, the Indian economy has undergone revolutionary transformations in relation to its political system. Some of these changes are progressive and beneficial to the country and society, nevertheless. A few new aspects of Indian politics that don't seem to be fully democratic have emerged at the advent of the twenty-first century. These characteristics don't indicate totalitarianism or a dictatorship; rather, they show how the welfare state is becoming less effective. Due to the imbalance between the interests of social classes and corporate interests brought about by the effects of globalization on Indian politics, several policies that might be referred to as "post democracy" were adopted by the political regimes. The nature of party politics, agenda-setting, policy priorities, the role of the media, and people's ambitions have all undergone significant changes. The goal of the current study is to highlight the characteristics of Indian politics in light of increased corporate involvement, party politics, and the role of the media in the new environment.

Keywords: Party Politics, Corporate Interventions, Media, Democracy, Trends

1. INTRODUCTION

The nature of party politics, the way agendas are created, the priority of policies, the role of the media, and people's ambitions have all changed significantly. In the past two to three decades, certain new patterns in Indian politics have emerged. The principles of genuine democracy have been violated by these modifications. The corporate world's growing importance in the political system has been a primary driver of these changes because it ensures the nation's prospects for rapid economic expansion and helps political players raise money. This has caused an abrupt paradigm shift in Indian politics, which has recently surfaced. It is vital to draw attention to and analyze these developments and fundamental changes in democratic functioning in recognising the shift in Indian politics' tone. The characteristics of Indian politics in light of party politics, expanding corporate involvement, and the media's function in the country's altered democratic environment.

The media must be unafraid, objective, and a true defender of democracy. Instead, it has evolved into a tool used to support the strong, influential politician. A dictatorship's dictator controls and limits all forms of communication to ensure that the achievements of the regime are vigorously publicised and that the public is not made aware of the activities of the opposition parties. The media in India covers a wide range of historical and contemporary topics that are crucial to democracy. Large corporate entities support political parties. Any political party's ideology is in jeopardy. The elected politician will leave one party after winning an election on the basis of a cabinet position or other financial gain. Every supporter of the democratic ideal should be concerned about the immoral and unholy alliance's growing influence in Indian politics.

There is no denying that the media is crucial to politics because it shapes public opinion and helps identify and address concerns. By demanding transparency in their behaviour, it can hold the

powerful in check. As a result, the power and influence of the government over its inhabitants can be effectively checked by an independent media. The "post-democracy" theoretical framework appears to be a suitable metric to track the changing aspects of Indian democracy's operation during the past few decades, particularly since the turn of the twenty-first century. The current paper is a modest attempt to track these political characteristics in post-democracy India.

2. THE POST-DEMOCRACY TAXONOMY OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Growing market forces' interventions have led to changes in governing practises that disregard the needs of the populace. These inescapable alterations and paradigm shifts in democracy have been referred to as "post democracy" by several Western social scientists and politicians, including Colin Crouch and Robert Rorty. In developing nations, democracy is beginning to take on peculiar characteristics that make it impossible to categorise it as either truly democratic or undemocratic.

Although democracy's fundamental principles have not changed, several new aspects have been incorporated into its operation. In more exact terms, it indicates that what new has appeared to diminish the role of democracy, but that democracy has nonetheless left its mark and left behind substantial residues, hence the phrase "post democracy." It draws attention to established democracies that are eroding to the point where an aristocratic system is taking over. To recognise the "going evolution," it is crucial to comprehend how the working principles of democracy have changed as a result of globalisation.

Many academics have attempted to define the aspects of democracy in order to assess the degree of its consolidation. Academic study has emphasised the following characteristics of a strong democracy: Everyone can concur on the following: A) establishing a government through an open, competitive process that upholds democratic rights and liberties; B) establishing the legitimacy of democratic processes marked by greater public participation and political justice. In other words, democratic institutions strike a balance between various societal interests. C) Political leaders and citizens alike strongly support democratic values; and D) democratic institutions what is political culture, and how does power shift from one elected government to another?. But, democracies have a tendency to drift towards the new, market-friendly aims rather than adhering to these objectives.

Because of the global crisis, interest in these changes has grown since 2008. That seriously calls into question the effectiveness of the current political system. It concerns the methodical way an oligarchy uses a democratic narrative to steer people away the diversity of consumer culture or away from diplomacy and towards other parts of life. According to Robert Rorty, "democracy will alter, but it won't be a dictatorship or a totalitarian regime—it will, first and foremost, be a kind of despotism that will be progressively imposed by the hereditary nomenclature."

The phrase is credited to Colin Crouch, who wrote an article titled "After Democracy" and had it published as a book in 2004. The welfare state's dwindling efficacy, according to him, has weakened democracy as the "golden age" of democracy has started to come to an end. This is the outcome of institutionalised corporate interests as well as a considerable misalignment between corporate goals and those of social classes. Essentially, "a closed elite" controls politics in general. ⁸ Because of this, a small group of powerful people's interests now have much more weight than the interests of the wider public. The political elites, he continues, are adept at exploiting the needs of the general populace.

Additionally, he asserts that political elites have mastered the art of manipulating the desires of common people. The fact that there are business deals between politicians and corporations, an

excessive reliance on media and technology, and a growing significance of powerful, active minorities is further seen by him as being detrimental to democracy.

As a result, the term "post-democracy" reflects its tenets, which are as follows: a) politicians operate in a system that is fully democratic, but their creativity and innovations are constrained to a formal shell; as a result, a small elite of them make difficult choices and co-opt democratic institutions; b) the emergence of a self-referential class through connections with the corporate world while ignoring the interests of the general public; c) the deterioration of welfare programmes as a result of the imbalance between corporate and social class interests, d) the political elite's ability to manage and influence popular demands, and e) top-down voter mobilisation efforts are some of the other factors, f) an excessive reliance on the media in political politics, and g) a preference for laws that are pushed by corporations.

3. NEW POLITICAL TRENDS IN INDIA

Throughout the past two to three decades, India's democracy has undergone obvious changes. The following categories can be used to group the changes in the Indian democratic political system: I While operating within a democratic framework, parties operate aristocratically. (ii) Welfarist politics are losing ground Political campaigns resemble corporate advertising campaigns more in terms of (iii) the nexus between corporate and political elites, (iii) the importance of politicians' personal lives as a tool for electioneering, (iv) the media's shift from being democratically oriented to being marketing-focused, and (v) political party changes in respect of – (i). placing more importance on electoral wins than on ideas and civic engagement, (ii) excluding the public from decision-making processes such as agenda-setting, party organisation, and policy preference-setting; and (iii) political communication patterns (depicted through excessive use of media in order to woo electorate).

4. AMENDMENTS TO POLITICAL PARTIES' DEMOCRATIC FRAMEWORK

In the past twenty years, political parties in India have seen significant changes in terms of structure, direction, and facilitation of citizen participation in politics. Currently, parties function aristocratically but within a representative republic. All political parties, whether it be regionally or nationally, has a predisposition towards authoritarian leadership and adopts a top-down approach to choosing policies and defining agendas rather than depending more on recommendations from experts. In terms of how the parties are set up, it can be observed that there is a lack of internal party democracy because majority of the key Lower level party activists are rarely included in judgement call bodies..

The top echelons of the parties are nominated by their elite members, who usually obey them. Even national party state leaders are chosen by high command (central leaders). The high command closely monitors the distribution of party tickets during general elections. The executive committees of parties, which are made up of the party chief's supporters, have a tendency to seek the party chief's approval for all important decisions. Regional parties have been observed to participate like the RJD, AIDMK, TMC, TDP, BSP, and SP have authoritarian leadership in their own organisations. These leaders make decisions on their own and give them the appearance of being democratic by means of necessary procedures.

Their contacts from bottom the octaves of political apparatus are useless because of the top-down decision-making structure. Even during the times in the previous 20 years when elections for those positions were planned, President of the parties is "allowed" to appoint the majority of State party chiefs. The internal party democracy in political parties is nonexistent, according to the national panel to analyse how the Constitution functions. It claims that while having a democratic

appearance, most political parties in India have oligarchic leadership. The persistent divisions between the National and State party organisations in virtually all national parties make it obvious that a national party shouldn't be overly centralised, much less individualised. Prof. M. P. Singh further highlights the importance of a strong personality in the recent resurgence of the BJP. According to the author, the cabinet ministers who remained in the BJP-led NDA despite internal disagreements have accepted Modi's rule. "The 'presidential' campaign and the individual appeal of the BJP prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi were mostly attributed to the success of the BJP at the leadership of the rump National Democratic Alliance (N.D.A).

Bringing numerous social issues to the political foreground is primary roles played by political parties in a democracy. One may argue that expert advice currently dominate agenda-setting more so than suggestions from party officials at lesser levels. For instance, Planning Commission of India was abolished, the National Institute of Transforming India Ayog (N.I.T.I Ayog) was founded, and Make in India, Start Up, Digital India, etc. were launched with-out considering their appropriateness to the country's conditions and current social needs. States have also employed similar strategies. In Bihar, for instance, the Nitish-led administration eliminated State Planning Board because it was clearly ineffective and recruited Mr. Prashant Kishore as a consultant.

The novel method of determining the agenda is in opposition to the standards and characteristics of a democratic process that involves participation. Political parties have historically served as the cornerstones of through local chapters, towns and residents were directly addressed, but due to the low standing of lower level party officials, they are now dependent on modern technology to spread their message.

5. PARTY POLITICS: IDEOLOGY'S DECLINE

A political party can be recognised by the philosophy with which it aims to advance the welfare of the populace, as is widely known. Party commitment to a distinct ideology and set of policies is necessary for democracy. The ideological punches that each party makes serve as a differentiator. Yet, there has been a rapid decline in the ideological stance of political parties recently, and those that are more concerned with ideologies are becoming fewer in number. This is demonstrated by the poor results of parties based on ideologies in the most recent general elections.

Seldom any gladiatorial punch that would set the parties apart ideologically exists now. We are aware that a political party can be recognised by the ideologies with which it attempts to advance the welfare of the populace. A party must adhere to a specific philosophy and set of policies in order to be democratic. The ideological punches made by the various parties distinguish them from one another. Nonetheless, there has been a significant decline in political parties' beliefs; rather, the parties that place greater emphasis on ideologies are fading, as evidenced by their disastrous general election campaigns. It is difficult to come up with a gladiatorial strike that would separate the parties according to ideologies. Without presenting any specific initiatives or results, each party affirms its dedication to growth, economic advancement, youth prosperity, etc.

The parties have not even had a positive perception of the idea of progress. Social justice, secularism, cultural nationalism, protectionism of downtrodden classes (dalitism), and other ideologies are among those that the parties are reported to have embraced; nonetheless, each party asserts that all of these philosophies are present in their platforms. Additionally, parties have exhibited differing inclinations at different regions inside the country itself. The parties present a variety of plans, some of which are at odds with one another.

The National Commission on Assessing Functioning of the Indian Constitution claims that the ideological orientation of political parties has rapidly deteriorated. In India, party dynamics have given rise to a politics that is worthless and goes against the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi, the country's founder. Politicization of crime and the criminalization of politics have become the norm as a result of declining moral standards both among general public and among leaders... The parties have become embroiled in a fight for power in the interest of individual goals due to the deterioration of leadership.

Developing countries' economies are being severely impacted by the post-globalization environment, and states are being forced to reduce public spending and welfare programmes for fiscal reasons. It is true, and a number of studies published in the mid-1990s suggested that the developing world is afflicted by four diseases: a financial crisis, high costs associated with providing services, inefficiency, and corruption. Due to these factors, these states were rent-seeking and development-resistant. As a result of globalisation, cost-effective governance has gained importance. In the meanwhile, governments have been compelled by the idea of modern public management to cut back on public spending and welfare programmes in order to adapt to the needs of the changing global economy. As a result, these countries' governments prioritised market-friendly policies over welfare programmes. The predicament has promoted a corporate-politician alliance and a disregard for the wellbeing of the populace. All of them contravene democratic ideals.

6. BUSINESS ELITE AND POLITICAL ELITE ARE INTERCONNECTED

In Indian politics, the connection between the political and business elites dates back to the 1920s, when Mahatma Gandhi began courting businesses for financial support of the freedom cause. J L Bajaj, Godrej, stock brokers, Seth Ananad Poddar, and grain merchants each contributed little under 13 lakh rupees, which is a sizable sum when compared to the current value of the rupee, which is over \$20,000). Politics and business were entwined in a beneficial circle. The nature of the connection between business-people and politicians has changed dramatically from the past. Corporate sector donations throughout the war for liberation were motivated by patriotism rather than personal benefit.

However, in recent times, Indian political elites have felt pressured to establish relationships with the corporate sector, particularly Multinational Corporations (M.N.Cs), for two reasons: first, they view these companies as potential sources of prosperity and economic growth, and second, they could provide funding regarding the costs of political campaigns and parties. The governments help the global corporations by lowering taxes and granting them more flexibility governing its affairs in a way that will enable the nation to "ride the wave of globalisation," which gives the firms a new degree of dominance. On the one hand, Indian industry could employ politicians to obtain certain benefits, while politicians had access to a sizable sum from corporate sources (apart from trivial public contributions). This is clear from the fact that businessmen were given tax breaks for their donations after 2003. Politicians' efforts to conceal the funding source and the persistence of these gifts in the form of illicit funds further changed the nature of the connection. Beyond any monetary gains, Gowda and Sridharan claim that "preserving donor anonymity helps reduce retaliations by political parties that may wish to sanction the donors for preferring their rivals." Political parties, regardless of beliefs, have appealed the Central Information Commission's recent ruling designating them as public institutions for the purpose of revealing their income, causing a stir. Moreover, efforts were made to modify the RTI Act in their favour.

The subsequent figures provide additional proof of this connection. The data on contributions to political parties shows that as a party's chances of winning elections improved, so did the amount of donations. In comparison to the Congress, whose donations increased from 8.42 crores to just 11.64

crores, the BJP's donations increased from 16.63 crores in 2010-11 to 86.87 crores in 2012-13. Left-leaning parties did poorly because during that time, donations to them fell by a third. The fact that Congress earned rupees 2008 crores as opposed to 996 crores by BJP during the period from 2004 to 2011 will make it more intriguing to know that party topped in receiving donations during that time. By examining the existing policy preferences and flexibility offered to the corporate sector by the Indian federal government and state governments, it is also possible to evaluate the transactional connection between political and business elites. The most obvious instances are the constant announcements of policies involving lower loan interest rates, the provision of land and other infrastructure advantages in support of business sector (such as the land acquisition bill), permanent residency, etc. For investors in industrial sector, Bihar State Government has boosted financial support to ten lakhs and increased the subsidy to ten crores. The party in power also finances a sizable number of advertisements from the exchequer, which helps to support the media.

7. MEDIA'S SHIFTING ROLE: CORPORATE-FRIENDLY

"Openness, accountability, and participation are essential components of good government and human-rights-based development, and they can only be promoted by independent and pluralistic media," 2005 World Press Freedom Day international conference's resolution stated. This is the media's standard function in a healthy democracy. Nonetheless, it has been reported that the 21st century's altered media role is actually working against us. It has twisted its face in favour of the business community and political elites during elections, especially, rather than favouring the political education of the populace. The amount of money spent by political players on publicity, the media's slant on the facts (trends including selection, suppression, and growth), opinion surveys, & the media's significant influence are some of the concerns that need to be highlighted in the context of the function of the media.

It has been shown that the last ten general elections have seen significant media electioneering investment. According to an ASSOCHAM analysis, political parties spent a staggering sum during the 2014 general election. Between Rs. 5000 and Rs. 6000 crores are estimated to have been spent, and it is discovered that media publicity accounted for 31% of all election expenses, with 10% of that amount being spent alone on social media. According to unofficial data, the BJP alone spent \$12,000,000,000 in the 2014 general elections. This brings up important issues regarding the trivialization of content and effects of the growing media ownership concentration in the control of large corporations.

These days, the media has been distorting the truth and stoking opposition to a particular political actor group. For instance, in a recent situation, several media outlets and editors completely disregarded ten-year rule of the UPA and branded it a "wasted decade." Yet, the media did not even contest this or draw attention to the important actions performed during this time to improve democracy by introducing the right to knowledge and education, alleviate poverty through programmes like MNREGA, etc. "With one stroke the entire past has been annihilated," writes Zoya Hassan, "but the media did not fight this, in fact, it has added weight to this by merely committing the mistake again of India's modern history."

The amount of live television coverage of one man's speeches had peaked. Hard inquiries and critical analysis of the veracity of his campaign's ideas and issues are not encouraged. Any topic that ran counter to their projections was avoided by the biased media. Despite rising evidence of distortions including "sponsored news," "coverage packages," "private treaties" with major firms, and "doctored opinion polls," as well as a rightward bias across all media platforms, including satire, spoof, and parody, media freedom is inviolate.

Concerns about the media's function evolving towards a market orientation are also raised by the subject of opinion polls. These methods of assessing party support base are the most accurate, according to international experience. Even though opinion polling was first introduced in India in the 1980s, it continued to develop with the advent of 24-hour news networks towards the end of the 1990s and the start of the 2000s, and media outlets began hiring different market research firms to conduct polls during elections. A C Nielson, ORG-Marg, the Centre for Media Studies, C-Voter, and other market research firms have also entered the industry. Over the past 1.5 decades, the opinion/exit polling sector has experienced tremendous growth.

The tremendous competition in the Indian media for conducting pre-poll surveys and exit polls is demonstrated by the last three general elections, which were held in the years 2004, 2009, and 2014. There is a general belief that forecasts from opinion polls could sway voters, particularly the undecided. Many believe that some surveys, if not all of them, are biased since they are funded by the parties involved. According to renowned Focus News Channel journalist Shankar Arnimesh, political parties have a direct impact on survey findings. "...during the 2004 Lok Sabha General Elections, a media adviser of the senior BJP leader instructed the poll agency that boosted the BJP's seats from 240 to 272," he said. The poll workers often all exercise.

The Electoral Commission requested a ban on opinion surveys from the date of election notification in a letter to the Ministry of Law and Justice in November 2013, after receiving new backing from numerous political parties. Yogendra Yadav indicated the same thing in opposition to Yogendra Yadav's resistance to the opinion surveys. Any attempt to outlaw opinion polls, he claimed, would only create a criminal market for information. Opinion polls would still be performed. These will be held because politicians will need them, parties will need them terribly, newspapers and media outlets will need them, etc. The nexus is not only contractual but also unavoidable.

A wide range of people are now able to communicate on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, blogs, LinkedIn, and other sites thanks to the information technology revolution (ITR). This has primarily been employed for political and electoral objectives in recent years. The tremendous influence that western democracies have had on peoples' political beliefs is also evident in India. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the impact of social media.

8. REMARKS ON PERSONAL LIVES: A POWERFUL ELECTION WEAPON

The deplorable charges pertaining to the private lives of politicians from opposing parties are frequently covered in news articles and broadcasts on electronic media (TV). Politicians started engaging in a verbal battle both during and before the elections that followed. These statements are useless to the general public in a democracy; instead, they are utilised by one party to incite animosity towards a particular candidate. Hatred-mongering violates democratic principles. All of those divisive arguments that are occasionally published cannot be referred to. During these times, the majority of politicians used personal lives of their rivals as the main topic of conversation. Nitish Kumar turned down Modi's request for a meal, and Modi explained why?

Also, a significant portion of his lectures focused on criticising Sonia and Rahul Gandhi's personal lives and urging them to return to Italy, the country of her parents' origin (or Nanihal for Rahul back to Italy). When asked by a journalist to describe Modi's plan, Mamta Banerjee of the TMC pointed out that "Sonia Gandhi" was one of his main priorities. RJD leader Lalu Yadav attacked Modi and Amit Shah hard. He described Amit Shah as a monster and Modi as the Godhra murderer ("Rakshas and pishach" in relation to Lalu). Rahul referred to Modi as a "suited booted" man and criticised his assertions that his chest was 56 inches wide.

Furthermore, a BJP politician in the state of Uttar Pradesh, where the Assembly elections are approaching, insulted Mayawati in a crass and morally repugnant manner. Furthermore, there are many instances of politicians using derogatory rhetoric during election campaigns. As individuals have nothing to do with these comments, all of these are not only improper in parliamentary terms but also undemocratic.

9. CONCLUSION

The characteristics of post-democracy can be connected with the aforementioned rising developments in Indian politics. Notwithstanding the fact that these developments are not truly democratic, they are unavoidable in the post-globalization era. Political parties are compelled to disregard democratic norms and the desires of the general public due to the interdependence of politicians, corporations, and the media. As a result of these consequences, the media's position has shifted away from democratic duties and towards market forces.

The end result was the emergence of trends that ignored people and kept them out of democratic processes and political participation, such as political elites' authoritative decision-making within a democratic framework, electoral prospects' dominance over party ideologies and ethics, undemocratic trends in party politics, and expanding media roles in the generation of political dissent and support.

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