
Voting: A Symbol of Indian Democracy

Ms. Garima Tyagi,

Assistant Professor, PG Dept. of H. Sc. & Research, N.K.B.M.G.(P.G.) College, Chandausi

INTRODUCTION

“The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter.”

Winston Churchill

The election system is the pillar of Indian Democracy. This system consists of various levels of elections to the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies and Panchayati Raj Institutions. Every level of election is related to other level of election. As a whole, this constitutes a network of election politics in contemporary India, and is the basic framework of India's democratic regime. India has been a democracy for over six decades as the largest democracy in the world by giving leadership to one billion plus people with multi-culture, multi-religious and multi-lingual affiliations.. In this time it has achieved remarkable successes. Dr A P J Abdulkalam, former President of India, at 2nd National Voters' Day function at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi (25th January 2012) addressed that in 2009, when the nation held general elections to the 15th Lok Sabha in five phases, we had an electoral strength of 714 million which is larger than the European Union and United States put together.

Elections indeed are the defining moments of the nation's future. Voting is the main form of political participation in liberal democratic societies. From a sociological perspective, the study of voting behavior focuses primarily on explaining who votes and how they vote. The analysis of voting patterns invariably emphasizes on the determinants of why people vote as they do and how they arrive at the decisions they make. Elector's photo identity card empowers every citizen to elect the right candidate as his representative in the Parliament or Assembly who will constantly work for realizing the growth, prosperity and peace of the nation. Independent India has been a large-scale experiment in democracy. Unlike many other nations that gained independence from colonial rule but descended into dictatorships and military rule, India has remained a democracy, despite its size and diversity. We pride ourselves on this achievement.

ORIGIN OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY

India's transition to democracy in the 1940s is under studied and ought to be further researched. Historians have often left such issues to political scientists, and the later often do not concern them with the past. Based on limited study, one argument in the relevant literature suggests that India's democracy is mainly a legacy of British colonialism. This argument is serious and merits some attention. As a contrast to this emphasize on the colonial legacy, other scholars emphasize the role of the Indian nationalist elite and nationalist movements in the birth of Indian democracy. Moore (1966) interpreted India's nationalist movement as a "bourgeois revolution" of sorts that helped clears the path for democracy.

YOUTH: ARCHITECTS OF DEMOCRACY

The importance of youth in a country is quite obvious. More young people are an advantage for a country. India is one of the countries of the world which is having a large population of youth. More young voters will lead to younger leadership as well as fresh perspectives on policies to be pursued by the country. In the future, the number of youth voters and their relative share will only grow progressively. In this scenario, it is paramount for the efficiency of the democracy to ensure that these youth are an integral and vibrant part of the democratic participation. How do we motivate the youth to be partners in the democratic elections? How do we motivate others who don't vote normally due to various other reasons? Youth, have decided to elect Members of the Parliament and Members of State Legislatures, only if they have proved to have contributed to the economic development of the constituency, state and the nation in their previous tenure. For the new entrants to politics, they should possess a track record of selfless, committed and honest service to the community where they reside or they work. Youth want to see elected members as their role models in performance in the Parliament or State Assembly, and also in their way of leading the life with integrity and succeeding with integrity. The youth, definitely, expect the elected representatives to ensure that the performance of the Parliament and State Assemblies are never disturbed or halted and youth consider this action of non-performance as a crime and a wasteful process. The citizens expect that availability time in the houses is fully utilized for drawing up vision for the nation, making laws and discussing and finding solutions to our national and regional

problems. Current demographic profile of India is heavily in favour of youth. It has political and social consequences not only for India but also for the world.

VOTING IS DEMOCRATIC DECISION

Indian democracy can thus be described as made up of two spheres of politics - the 'demonic' (politicians and high politics) and the 'demotic' (the electorate), with the electorate seeing its own politics as the purer in intention and action. Demotic politics is based on hope of a better future, the need for participatory citizenship and a sense of duty, and a celebration of universal franchise. And it is for these reasons that Indians across the country emphasize the importance of exercising this right assiduously, if only to remind those in power of their ultimate dependence on their votes.

Further, the right to vote is also seen as a foundational right of each citizen that makes possible the demand for other basic rights – to food, education and security. 'The vote is our weapon' is a statement that is often used to explain this sense of empowerment. To make inferences and predictions about behaviour concerning a voting decision, certain factors such as gender, race, culture or religion must be considered. Moreover, other influences include the role of emotions, political socialization, tolerance of diversity of political views and the media. The effect of these influences on voting behaviour is best understood through theories on the formation of attitudes, beliefs, schema, knowledge structures and the practice of information processing.

Surveys indicate that people are generally happier in individualistic cultures where they have rights such as right to vote. The degree to which voting decision is affected by internal processing systems of political information and external influences alters the quality of making truly democratic decision. Citizens use different decision criteria if they are called to exercise their right to vote in- (i) presidential (ii) legislative (iii) local elections or in a (iv) referendum.

In national elections it is usually the norm that people vote based on their political beliefs. Local and regional elections differ, as people tend to elect those who seem more capable to contribute to their area. A referendum follows logic as people are specifically asked to vote for or against a clearly defined policy. The act of voting is seen to be the necessary first step

in putting forward future demands and holding democratically elected governments to account.

CONCLUSION

Elections in India are a big festival. Conscience is the light of the Soul that burns within the chambers of our psychological heart. It is as real as life is. It raises the voice in protest whenever anything is thought of or done contrary to the righteousness. Conscience is a form of truth that has been transferred through our genetic stock in the form of the knowledge of our own acts and feelings as right or wrong. So, let us all take a pledge to effectively use our vote and use our conscience to vote for the ideal candidate who can ensure growth, prosperity and peace of our nation. When we keep conscience clear, righteousness will prevail upon us.

Righteousness

Where there is righteousness in the heart, There is beauty in the character.

When there is beauty in the character, There is harmony in the home.

When there is harmony in the home, There is an order in the nation.

When there is order in the nation, There is peace in the world.

For achieving a good governance and great society, the starting point is righteousness in the heart. The important aspect of righteousness, honesty, selflessness, unbiased attitude and integrity are embedded in each one of our voters. If all the voters of our country decide righteously, surely India can be proud to be a great country with great leaders.

REFERENCES

- i. Jena, B.B. and J.K.Baral (ed.). 1989. Election Politics and Voting Behaviour in India: A Study of Orissa. Delhi. Discovery Publishing House.
- ii. Kohli, Atul. 2001. The Success of Indian Democracy. The Press Syndicate of The University of Cambridge. U.K.
- iii. Norio, Kondo. 2007. Election Studies in India. Discussion Paper No. 98. Institute of Developing Economics