ELECTIONS AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN INDIA AND ITS DETERMINANTS: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract- One of the most important features of our democratic framework is 'Election' which is held at a systematic period. The electoral system in any country should support and strengthen the empowerment of the people of the country to use the system to guarantee an equitable framework of economic and social justice. India is a constitutional democracy with a parliamentary system of government and at the heart of the system is a commitment to hold regular, free and fair elections at all the three levels (National, State and Local level). Voting is one of the most commonly used terms in contemporary age of democratic politics as it shows a formal expression of an individual's choice for or against a certain candidate or political party during the elections. In a limited way, voting refers to the function of electing representatives by casting votes in elections. Frequent and highly competitive elections based on universal adult franchise have become the hallmark of Indian Democracy-the largest of the world. It is an acknowledged fact that contrary to the history of most modern representative democracies which began with the right to vote from exclusion to inclusion. India stands out as a triumphant democracy by providing non-discriminatory Right to Vote to every citizen of India from the very inception of its constitution. In contradistinction to many of the countries in its neighbourhood and beyond, India has not resorted to coups or revolutions to change government but has done so through „ballot” rather than „bullet”. When some of the Western democracies are found suffering from „democratic deficit”. Faith in democratic process finds manifestation in the exponentially increasing voter turnouts in the national, provincial and local level elections in the country. The active political participation of the citizens of India during the elections, have succeeded in electing and rejecting governments legitimizing representative democratic system of the country. But this Indian story of elections and journey of voter participation has not been limited to numbers or statistics alone, qualitative changes are also being witnessed since the last decade of the 20th century, wiz post 73rdand 74thAmendments where after the electoral participation has been expanded to the 3rd tier - grass root level - of government along with reservation of seats for women. Thus electoral & participatory democracy has acquired a new connotations and the voting behaviour of people is perceptibly affecting the Indian democratic system highlighting its strengths and also exposing its faultiness. Besides the traditional factors that have hitherto influenced voting behaviour such as religion, caste, community, language, money, muscle power, ideology, political wave etc. There are other factors which have tremendously impacted voting behavior during the preceding decade. Apart from this, the role of Election Commission and a few electoral reforms have also augured far reaching changes in the electoral process and also party system in the country. The constitutionally established autonomous multimember election commission of India in attempting to ensure „free and fair elections” has become extremely vigilant even adopting an „activist” role. The audio visual media is also playing a defining role in „creating„ „demolishing” and „affecting” public opinion. This paper besides scrutinizing the overall political culture of the country has specifically focused on the critical issues pertaining to elections and changes being witnessed in the voting behaviour of the citizen in the country

Keywords: Election, voting behaviour, determinants, democracy, charisma personality, communalism, ideology.

INTRODUCTION:
„Voting” is one of the most commonly used terms in contemporary age of democratic politics. The ever increasing popularity of democratic theory and practice has even made this term a household name. In democratic systems, and their number is quite large and even increasing, each adult citizen uses „voting” as a means for expressing his approval or disapproval of governmental decisions, policies and programmers of various political parties and the qualities of the candidates who are engaged in the struggle to get the status of being the representatives of the people. In a limited way
voting refers to the function of electing representatives by casting votes in elections. However, in broad terms, as Richard Rose and Harve Massavir point out, voting covers as many as six important functions:-
1. It involves individual’s choice of governors or major governmental policies;
2. It permits individuals to participate in a reciprocal and continuing exchange of influence with officeholders and candidates;
3. It contributes to the development or maintenance of an individual’s allegiance to the existing constitutional regime;
4. It contributes to the development or maintenance of a voter’s disaffection from existing constitutional regime;
5. It has emotional significance for individuals; and 6. For some individuals it may be functionless i.e devoid of any emotional or political significant personal consequences.

Voting” as such is a function of immense significance for the voters, the candidates and the students of politics. The study of voting behaviour has come to be regarded as an important aspect of contemporary political research and theory.

**WHAT IS VOTING BEHAVIOUR:**

Samuel S. Eldersveld in his article, Theory an Method in Voting Behaviour Research” writes: “The term „voting behaviour” is not new. But it has been used of late to describe certain areas of study and types of political phenomena which previously had either not been conceived or were considered irrelevant.” Voting behaviour is not confined to the examination of voting statistics, records and computation of electoral shifts and swings. It also involves an analysis of individual psychological processes (perception, emotion, and motivation) and their relation to political action as well as of institutional patterns, such as the communication process and their impact on election. In the words of Plano and Riggs, “Voting Behaviours is a field of study concerned with the ways in which people tend to vote in public election and the reasons why they vote as they do.” The term voting behaviour has recently been expended in meaning and is taken as one major and board area of study subsumed within the broader designation of political behavior. It involves a study of human political behaviour in the context of voting in elections. Voting behaviours studies open windows on the minds of the millions of people who are involved in the political process as voters. These constitute an important area of political science in which theory can be systematically and qualitatively measured and tested.

Election refer to a process of democratic participation in which all the people express their opinion about personalities and issues by making on a ballot paper. Election express democratic class struggle through voting. Major differences in the political allegiances of different age groups, classes, education, religious or ethnic groups have been reported by voting survey. Voting for right or left depends upon a person’s life experiences. The study of electoral behavior constitutes a very significant area of empirical investigation that takes the subjects of politics very close to the discipline of sociology with the result that a new dimension of advanced study, rather a discipline, is becoming more and more popular with the name of political sociology or sociological politics. Man is a rational creature in the philosophical sense of term; he is not so rational in the realms of his economic and political behaviour. An empirical study of the electoral behavior displays the astounding fact that the behavior of man is influenced by several irrational forces. The role of political parties and pressure groups in invoking religious and communal factors, influence of money or charismatic personality of a leader and a host of other irrational forces have their definite influence on the minds of the voters. The role of these irrational forces can be discovered or discerned in case a student of empirical politics focuses his attention on how the favorable results of and election are obtained. This fact applies to every democratic system and, as such, India is no exception. However, keeping the case of Indian voting behavior in view, Prof.V.M.Sirsikar well observes: “An enquiry into the process of election indicates factors other than rationality. It may be said that India has secured a stable government, but the mass manipulation, casteist influences, minority fears, and charismatic hold of the Prime Minister have played no main part in this process.”

**VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN INDIA:**

India is the largest working democracy, a parliamentary democracy, in the world. At the time of March- April 1996 polls, an electorate of as many as 591.5 million voters went to the polls to choose their representatives from amongst 14474 contestants. All men and women of 18 years or above of the age have the right to vote in Indian elections. Despite the fact that nearly half of them are illiterates, they have in the past acted wisely and in mature way to elect their representatives. They have already participated in Eleven elections to Lok Sabha, several elections to state legislative assemblies and a large number of bi- elections.

With the first general elections held in India in 1952 was some election studies conducted. In the beginning these studies lack methodological rigor and sophistication. But as more and more studies of election politics and voting behaviour were made the research tools used by psychologists became increasingly sharpened. At the outset most of these studies were impressionistic and journalistic in orientation. However, with the increased use of survey method and observation technique has the quality of election studies in India improved.

Election studies in India were mainly inspired by western studies on voting behaviour, especially the Columbia and Michigan studies in the United States. The scholars of Columbia university of New York emphasized the influence of
social and environmental forces on the choices of voters. While the studies undertaken by the Michigan Survey Research Centre stressed the psychological variables or the subjective world of the individual voters. In reaction to the excessive emphasis on social and socio-psychological variables by the above two schools, a group of scholars with a view to redressing the balance in voting research, tended to draw attention to impact of political variables on voters choice. In reference to American voters, key stated that the electorate was not "strait-jacketed" by social determinants or moved by sub-conscious urges triggered by devilishly skillful propagandists. He said that it was rather one of an "electorate moved by concern about central and relevant questions of public policy, of governmental performance, and executive personality".

Elections in India have been mainly studied by political scientists, but the contributions of social Anthropologists in this respect cannot be ignored. Special mention must be of F.G. Baily and A.C. Mayer who have dealt with elections mainly at micro-level. With the help of both participants and non-participants observation technique they have delved into the election politics and voting behaviour of the people. They have further emphasized the linkage between local, state and national politics which is woven round patronage and brokerage. They have highlighted the "Machine" character of election politics. Voting Behaviour studies can be divided into two major categories; one school of thought has followed the sociological approach. The study which is most representative of this point of view is contained in the book voting” by Berelson, Lazararsfeld and Mcphee. It stresses the fact that socio-economic and ethnic status is related to the process of the voters choice. The conclusion in the books; Within the various social strata (ethnic, religious and economic) the political parties maintain fairly constant rates of support which differ markedly from one stratum to next. In order to account for this, one has to assume that political discussion goes. On mainly within certain groups and is much less likely to cross social barriers of all kinds. The other school of thought is represented by the authors of the American voters.

In contrast with the sociological approaches of the Columbia school the Ann Arbor group presented the psychological and political approach. The psychological approach does recognize the role of social characteristics like socio-economic status, religion and family influence. However, it argues "The distribution of social characteristics in a population varies but slowly over a period of time. Yet crucial fluctuations in the national vote occur from election to election. Such fluctuation can not be accounted for by independent variables which over brief spans of time, do not vary. The attitudinal approach directed more attention to political objects of orientation such as the candidate and the issues, which do shift in the short term. Parties, candidate and issues are the immediate determinants of voting behaviour. They are the intervening variables. The intervene between the distant but more permanent sociological and political forces that operate upon the voter and his actual vote. The psychological school has concentrated on three variables, party- identification, and candidate-orientation and issue orientation. They recognize these as the most significant factors. By party identification is meant a voters psychological attachment to a political party. By issue orientation, is meant the attitude of a person towards current questions and as to what the government should do or should not do. Issue orientation is the determinant in voting behaviour in the U.S.A because: Political parties do not adopt clear cut and distinct positions on current issues. Voters are most concerned about general issues than specific issues. Candidate- orientation means the attitude of the voter towards the personal qualities of the candidate. This can be broken up further into his performance, capabilities and his personal qualities kike his honesty, his religious devotion etc. candidate orientation is significant factor. The data pertaining to the elections and the electoral process can help us to analyze the voting behaviour of the people of India. Infact, the voting behaviour studies conducted in India have identified the following main political and socio-economic factors which act as determinants of voting behaviour in India.

DETERMINANTS OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN INDIA:
The behaviour of voter is influenced by several factors such as religion, caste, community, language, money, policy or ideology, purpose of the polls, extent of franchise, political wave etc. The political parties and groups make use of these variables for the sake of winning the battle of the ballot box. Despite making their professions for enlightened secularism, politicians can be found making appeals to the religious and communal sentiments of the people; they can also be found involved in exploiting the factors of language or money to achieve the purpose of emerging successful in the war of votes. Appeals are issued and canvassing campaigns conducted in the name of a particular policy or ideology for the same purpose. The interest of the voters and accordingly their behaviour at the time of voting is also influenced by the nature or purpose of the elections or the extent of the suffrage. The force of charisma has its own part to play whereby the voters are influenced by a slogan like “Garibi Hatao”, or “A vote for a pair of bullocks is vote for Panditji and progress”, or “Indira means India, India means Indira”, or “Indira means Dictatorship”, “My heart beats for India” versus “Rajiv means Bofors” and the like. The role of all these factors can be examined in the study of Indian electoral behaviour. There are several factors responsible for voting Behaviour in India. This module will highlight some determinants of Indian voters. In India following main political and socio-economic factors which act as determinants of voting behaviours in our Democratic system:
CASTE—Caste has always been a remarkable feature of the Indian politics and politicization of caste has always been done. It is still continuing to be very relevant determinant of voting behavior. The political parties across the whole India without any exception tend to use the caste strategies. Political parties while formulating policy decisions and their action plans, always keep the caste factor in their mind. Caste is used from distribution of tickets to campaigning of candidates to speeches and rallies. Rajni Kothari has observed about the role of caste in Indian politics as “Indian politics is castiest and caste is politicized.” These days the parties have started having the caste statistics of the constituencies which helps them to select the candidate of that caste which has the majority and can win the seat for the party. People are asked to vote in the favor of their caste leaders, even casteist slogans are also raised like Jat ki vot jat ko, brahmin votes vs. Jat votes or jats vs ahirs, brahmin vs dalits etc.

The famous scholar Paul Brass has effectively said about caste factor in Indian politics that "At the local level in the countryside by far the most important factor in voting behavior remains caste solidarity, large and important castes in a constituency tend to back within a respected member of the caste for a political party with whom their caste members identify however local functions and local state functional elements that involve inter-caste coalitions are also important factors in influencing voting behavior."

Democracy and caste are different from each other as the caste stands for fragmentation of society while the democracy stands for equality and Unity in society. While the caste leads to inequality by birth but democracy advocates equality by birth and social inclusion as well. In the contemporary scenario of the Indian politics the caste and politics are closely related and also influence each other. Millions of Indians are uneducated and even those who are educated don’t think the need to analyze the political leader and parties and to vote on the basis of reasonable merit while they think about the caste to which they belong and the cast to which their leader belongs. Different castes have become vote bank of different parties on the basis of their caste identification as Yadav’s in Uttar Pradesh vote for Samajwadi Party while the Dalit population is closely attached to Bahujan Samaj party and the BJP is also said to be dominated by the upper castes.

Besides the consideration of caste in ticket distribution and rallies and speeches the caste is also considered in the appointment of ministers, transfer and posting of public officers, reservation policy etc. Thus, we can see that the Marathas dominate in the in the Maharashtra cabinet, Vokkaliga and Lingayats in in Mysore. Recently in 2017 Assembly elections in UP the BJP appointed Yogi Aditya Nath as the CM to allure upper caste Hindus and also made Dinesh Sharma and Swami Prasad as deputy CM to show that the Dalits are also represented at high level in BJP. In the Samajwadi party in UP Ajam Khan is always given importance because a large Muslim population identifies with him and votes for Samajwadi party. In the national politics also its ensured that the representation of castes is politically appropriate as per the need of the party. The manifesto now is also influenced by the caste factor and parties even sometimes in their manifesto talks about special benefits to particular castes to earn their votes. For example, in the 2012 elections the Samajwadi government promised the 18% reservation to the Muslims, recently the reservation policy of the BJP for 10% reservation to the EWC (economically backward sections) are such examples.

Understanding through example—Recently, the Supreme Court of India amended a provision of the Dalit or SC/ST atrocities act where in the earlier law the police had to arrest the person against whom the complaint had been made by a Dalit and after that the investigation was supposed to be done but after the court's amendment the provision changed that the investigation will be done primarily and the person against whom complaint is filed will be arrested only if that person will be found guilty and further procedure will be applied as per law. After this amendment the SC and ST communities protested in the whole of India and the government reacting on the protest altered the new provisions made by the apex court and all the political parties supported SC and ST communities and stood with them because of the reason that Dalit or SC and ST constitutes a big share in the population and if any party will go against them and support the supreme court's decision then that party will lose the hold over the Dalit population and it will politically harm them. Even going to a much extent before the central government could alter the supreme court's decision the former Madhya Pradesh CM (Shivraj Chauhan) said that nobody will be arrested in his state before the inquiry regarding same issue, which was against the court's decision. He said this because his party BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party) have a good control over the Savama population in MP and if they will not talk in the interest of Savaras they will lose the savama hold. In the survey it was found that the caste (30%) is one of the major factors determining the electoral behave. The religion (34%), regionalism (8%) and performance (28%). This tells us that the politics is done through using religion and caste basically as weapons though the performance also matters and that is why the authoritarian government of Indira Gandhi was thrown by the country after emergency and also Bajpayee government in 2004.

2. CHARISMATIC PERSONALITY—The charismatic personality of leaders has always played influential role in elections: Through this mode of influencing electoral behavior a particular leader becomes the attraction for the population and that leader carns the vote through his charismatic personality. In India there has been many charismatic personalities like the Jawaharlal Nehru, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Jay Prakash Narayan, Indира Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, and our current prime minister Narendra Modi. These leaders have time to time summoned the votes of the people for their parties. In the meetings and rallies of such personalities the population reaches in a large amount to listen their leader. In the same way at regional level also the charismatic personalities exist and they also have their influence on voters. It
includes the leaders like MamtaBanerjee, Kanshiram (now died) etc. These personalities directly influence the mind of the people and that brings a wave in the elections and their party earns a lot benefit from them. Often, they raise slogans like 'Garibi Hatao', 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas', India means Indira and Indira means India', etc. In 2014 elections the charisma of PM Modi brought the BJP in power whereas it was out of power after the last Vajpayee government in 2003-2004. Same effect was visible in the 1977 elections in the leadership of JP Narayan, the miraculous win of India in Bangladesh war gave Indira the same kind of image and that influenced the Assembly elections of 1972 as well.

3. REGIONALISM- It's also another important determinant of voting behaviour. The regional parties appeal the voters to vote in their favor on the regional grounds and raise their sentiments which makes electorates to vote for them. The regional leaders play an important role in promoting regionalism and earning vote on regional sentiments. Often times in speeches we hear the comments like "Ye bahri kaha se aa gya yeh shaher to hamara hai." The diversity of India is a promoting factor to the regionalism. There is diversity of language, religion, caste, language, culture, ethnic groups, communities etc. The regionalism is promoted by the regional and sub regional existence of these cultures, communities or ethnic groups and this feeling of regionalism gets fueled by the regional deprivation sense. In India since many centuries' different religions, communities, people of different culture and traditions are taking shelter.

The regionalism has given rise to the regional parties and regional parties also have given raise to regionalism, both complement each other. Since independence regionalism has always influenced electoral behavior. The mass mobilization of 1950s and 1960s brought the government to look at the regionalism. First the state of Andhra Pradesh was formed as a new state on regional- linguistic demands. The state reorganization in 1956 on linguistic basis and the North eastern states reorganization act of 1971 further deepened the regionalism and politics revolved around it. Formation of states like Uttaranchal from Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand out of Bihar and Chhattisgarh out of Madhya Pradesh and recently Telangana out of Andhra Pradesh are the results of regionalism and the demands of people of particular region lead by leader. Politicians always have harvested the benefit from these regional feelings of people for their political benefits.

The recent exodus of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh people from Gujrat is an example of impact of regionalism in influencing voting behavior of people. Though it was claimed that the people of Bihar and UP take the employment opportunities which leads to unemployment in Gujrat. But the politics around this was not unknown to anyone. In Maharashtra also the MNS. (Maharashtra Nav-Nirman Sena) workers have many times been found beating and putting to exodus the people of Bihar and UP and their main objective in doing so is the regional politics as they want to allure the people of Maharashtra by showing that they want the primary development of Maharashtrians so that people can should for their party. Often times the state government also make the decision of reservation for the native people in jobs in government fields. This include states like Gujrat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh etc.

Regionalism and linguism are also very closely related to each other in India as every region in India have their own language and culture like MP, UP, Rajasthan are the Hindi speaking states so here Hindi speaking leaders and Hindi politics dominate while in West Bengal region the Bengali language is spoken so there Bengali dominates. In 1952 the fast unto death of a Telegu leader Potti Sriramula gave raise to linguistic division of Indian states and this also fueled the raise to sub nationalism and regionalism using language as a tool. Since always the leaders while appealing for vote to the people in their speeches and rallies use the sentences like "mujhe Bihar ki dharti ma ne bulaya hai", Mujhe Ganga Maiyya ne bulaya hai", "UP keLadke", "Gujrat to meri matra bhumi hai" etc. In the survey the regionalism factor was found to be helpful less for the parties as it was at only 8% that means that around 8% people tend to vote on regional grounds though the party performance, religion, caste is the dominant one.

4. MONEY AND MUSCLE POWER- In India a very large population is poor and fall below the poverty line (BPL). About 25% of Indian population according to government data fall below the BPL line. Internationally the income less than 1.90 dollar is the criteria to define extremely poor people and according to this measurement around 21.2 percent of Indians are extremely poor. Employment is also not good in India and crores of people are unemployed. The condition is that even for a single vacancy for a post many thousand people apply. It cannot be said that the people of Bihar and UP take the employment opportunities. The diversity of India means Indira and Indira means India', etc. In 2014 elections the charisma of PM Modi brought the BJP in power whereas it was out of power after the last Vajpayee government in 2003-2004. Same effect was visible in the 1977 elections in the leadership of JP Narayan, the miraculous win of India in Bangladesh war gave Indira the same kind of image and that influenced the Assembly elections of 1972 as well.

Considering all these data the political behavior of poor and some greedy people is influenced by the use of money. At all the times since elections in India the money power has always been used to gain support of people so the role of money in influencing electoral behavior cannot be undermined. During the elections the candidates directly or indirectly give money to their constituency voters and people sell their votes, sometimes leaders also provide food, liquor and other materials to people to fulfil their(leader's) ambitions, ie, to get elected. From the big to small level elections or Parliamentary to panchayat elections the money is used everywhere. Notably in the rural India the Panchayat elections are fought basically on money power and relations, though other factors like caste also work but the former two are very dominant. This is the case in the whole of India and every party and their leaders use this to gain votes. So, in elections the rich party and candidates have more probability to win the elections. On the other hand, it should also be noticed that this happens in general elections or in non-wave elections but in wave elections this factor works extremely
rarely. In this context Paul Brass has said that- "A wave election is one in which a clear tendency begins to develop among the electorate in a single direction and in favor of a national party or its leader. It is based upon an issue or set of issues that transcend local calculations and coalition and draws the bulk of the uncommitted and wavering voters in the same direction as the word spreads from village to village and tea stall to tea stall."

The election commission have also considered the peculiarity of the issue and has formulated laws and conditions on the contesting parties and candidates, but these laws and conditions has not been successful in minimizing the use of money in the elections. Many steps like flying squad, video surveillance, static surveillance teams, customs, investigation directorates of income tax etc. have been taken. To stop influencing electoral behavior by making use of money the some of the provisions are listed below-

• Fixation of election expenditure.

Flying Squad- It is vigilant on the illegal transport of cash, liquor, narcotics are dealt as per election laws and other laws.

Notification by Election commission for non-use of money to win elections and further investigation with agencies like investigation wing of income tax department.
• Search and seizure of illegal money, liquor and other materials by flying squads,
• Deployment of team of special observers.

The election commissions campaign for ethical voting.

5. **MUSCLE POWER**- The powerful people have always dominated the weak and history is the evidence that many powerful have done atrocities on the weak people and their relation is close to that of master and slave. The use of muscle power in influencing the people choice to vote cannot be undermined. Muscle power is used in aid with money power to threaten the voters and to force them to vote for a particular candidate or party. Many cases of booth capturing, forcing people to vote for particular candidate, beating people for not voting in favor of particular candidate have been observed. Often times the Election Commission due to booth capturing has cancelled and re-scheduled the polling. Though this mode of influencing behavior is generally found in the societies where the people are poor, weak and helpless.

6. **RELIGION OR COMMUNALISM** - India is a land of many religions like Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism. Sikhism, Christianity etc. This makes India a land of diversity of beliefs, faith, worship, idols and so on. But these beliefs of the sentiments of the people are used by the politicians time to time to harvest the crop of votes. At the time of the voting the sentiments of the people are aroused by hate speeches, communal policy decisions and various other religious stunts. In India along with the caste, religion is another very important determinant of voting choice of people.

Many times, the party in power exploit the religious sentiment even through legislation to get political mileage. Also, in their manifesto they raise the communal and religious issues for the same purpose. For example, in Shah Bano case, the Rajiv Gandhi government altered the supreme court's decision (to pay the maintenance by a Muslim husband to her wife after divorce, under the section 125 of the Criminal procedure act) after the mass population of Muslims went against the court's decision claiming that it was interference in their sharia (Islamic Law) Rajiv Gandhidid it as he wanted to take the political mileage from the Muslims at that time. Similarly, it is argued that the Triple Talaq Act. By the Modi government has been brought to take the political mileage from Muslim women, though it is also a case of injustice with the Muslim women in the name of triple talaq. The issue of Ram Mandir is closely associated with the rise of BJP government has been brought to take the political mileage from Muslim women, though it is also a case of injustice with the Muslim women in the name of triple talaq. The issue of Ram Mandir is closely associated with the rise of BJP as when the BJP in its Palampur resolution in 1989 took the issue of constructing the Ram mandir on its shoulders, in the following general elections BJP got a big boost from the Hindu religion population.

In our country there are various communal political parties, pressure groups and also communal leaders. The presence of communal party has more degraded thesituation and more politicized the religion. These parties can be identified even from their names like AIMIM (All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen). Muslim League, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, Shivsena etc. It also includes the pressure groups like Rastria Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad etc. All these parties and groups stay activated and try to politicize the religion time to time. Communalism is such a bad experience that it even led to the division of India into India and Pakistan having different set of communal populations. India have two major national parties INC (Indian National Congress) and BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party) and in the name of securalism Congress try to target Hindu and Muslim votebank while the Bhartiya Janata Party targets the Hindu votes in the name of Hindutva which makes involvement of both the parties in the communal politics. This communal politics is not just on the national level but its scope is also at the state assembly elections and even small level elections like Panchayat elections and Municipal Elections as well. At every level the leaders ask the voters to vote in their favor in the name of religion or their communities. Even at many times the non-religious issues are given communal color by the politicians to exploit the sentiments of voters for their own political benefit. For example, at the time of demonetization AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi said that in Muslim area ATM's, money is not filled, VHP's Praveen Togadiya said that Muslims should be stopped from buying properties. There is a very long list of hate speeches and statements given by various leaders of different parties for arousing the religious sentiments of people. This includes the names like UP CM Yogi Aditya Nath, Al MIM leader Owaisi brothers, BJP leader Sakshi Maharaj, Amit Shah, Giriraj Singh, Sadhvi Prachi and even Prime Minister Modi. It also includes
leaders like Praveen Togadia, Subramanyam Swamy, Sanjay Raut, Sadhvi Deva Thakur, Bal Thackeray(died), Tarun Vijay. Azam Khan and many more from all the parties, rarely without any exception. Some of these statements to influence voter's choice through hate speeches are listed below-

- UP CM Yogi Aditya Nath Z Mosque should be converted into den of pigs
- UP CM Yogi Aditya Nath seed in love Jihad if one Hindu girl is converted 100 Muslim girls should be converted to Hinduism.
- AI MIM leader Akbar Uddin Owaisi shared where all did Ram's mother go wandering and where did she give birth to him
- Shiv Cena MP Sanjay Raut said revoke voting rights of Muslims
- BJP MLA Tarun Vijay said lynching a person for eating beef is ok
- BJP Minister Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti said those who are non-Hindus are illegitimate haramzade
- SP minister former Azam Khan said RSS volunteers are homosexualthat's why they never get married
- RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat said all Muslims are Hindus.

In the survey it was observed that there are a large number of voters who still vote on the community and religious grounds, though in the same survey it was visible that people answer to the question that "what should be determinant of voters choice while voting" was that performance of party and leader should be major determining factor of electoral behavior at 70% but caste and religion at 4 and 12 percent respectively.

7. LANGUAGE- India has a diversity of language and language has been a determinant of electoral behavior in India. Often during the elections, the leaders ask to vote for them by arousing the linguistic feelings of people. In 1956 the states were re-organized on the linguistic basis (and also afterwards) which clearly indicates the impact of language in politics even many political parties are raised by making linguism as base, it includes the list of the parties like DMK in Tamil Nadu and TDP in Andhra Pradesh etc. After the fast unto death by Potti Srinamulu (a Telegu Leader) the Andhra Pradesh was carved out of composite Madras Presidency. In many states there has been contradiction between the languages for status for dominance. When the issue of language comes into picture people get influenced easily because people have an emotional attachment with their language. Many times, there have been bitter fights on the issue of language. In Maharashtra Assembly once an MLA was forced to take oath in Marathi as he was proceeding in Hindi. It was a big concern among the Indian constitution drafting members that what should be the official language of India. Many languages were claimed along with Hindi like Bangla, Tamil, etc. but the Hindi was the choice of the majority of the members. There also has been many anti- Hindi agitations in India like anti-Hindi agitations in Tamil Nadu. Periyar lead the agitation and the whole issue was politicized to arouse the feelings of Telegu speakers. Today also we see that the regional leaders prefer to address the meetings and rallies in their native language to show their affection towards that particular language and also while the leaders address the other language people theyat least try to learn and communicate in that language to show that nobody else is in merit than them. These are all the tactics to influence and allure the voter's choice.

In the survey it was observed that in modern India the voters rarely consider the linguistic issues while voting and people vote around 2% on linguistic grounds. Though in the same survey the respondents to the question that "should language be a basis of voting behavior" responded that no, it should not determine our voting behavior. Rather the performance of the party and its ideology was stressed to determine the electoral behavior.

8. IDEOLOGY- The word ideology is one of the most frequently coined word by the hands of political leaders and also, we witness the use of the word in our daily life. Every time we could hear the leaders asking for supporting the ideology of democracy, secularism, liberalism, socialism or patriotism. We also know that some people in our societies are committed to certain ideologies and they prefer to vote for the party that profess the ideology with which they identify themselves. So, it could be argued that ideology also becomes a determining factor for the voter's choice.

Generally, what happens is that these set of people support the candidate's field by the party with whom their ideology identify. Though it should also be noted that the amount of such people is considerably less. But a question can be raised here that are the political parties really committed to the ideology on whose name they urge the voters to vote for them or they just use that particular ideology. For example, in Indian politics parties like BJP, SP, INC and almost parties say to support Gandhian Ideology, secularism, humanism but how much they follow them is the central question, because anybody can pronounce an ideology but to put it into practice in their acts is challenging and even more challenging when it comes to politics and running the government.

The survey organized by author tells that the ideology is also a good determining factor of voting behavior and as per the collected data it accounted for 34-40 percent. So, the ideological contest can be ascribed as one of the desirable contests as per the public demands but the caste, religion etc. can’t.

9. FARMER'S ISSUE- India has always been dominated by the farming sector. About the 50 percent of the population depends on the agriculture and hence, becomes the main source of income. It also contributes to around 18 percent of the GDP. The Economic survey of 2017- 18 indicated a handsome amount of mechanization of the farming sector, consequently India becoming the world's largest production of the tractors. But there are certain issues that are
faced by the farmers and the farming sector which often times leads to protest by the farmers across the whole country. Some of the key issues of the farmers include:

Minimum support price- often times the farmers protest for reaching the service of minimum support price to them because they do not get that and many times due to raised production they even do not get the cost price of production of their crops.

10. **IRRIGATIONAL PROBLEMS** - Indian farmers basically depend on the monsoon so, when there is a not proper rainfall during some year the production reduces and farmers suffers a huge. Due to such reasons the production of pulses has decreased since the land on which pulses raise is un irrigated.

11. **INEFFECTIVE POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT** - There is no generally adjusted cost at which farmers can buy grains and seeds and sell their production. This is the one of the key reasons that a big number of farmers are committing suicide. As for example a farmer takes the loan from a moneylender or zamindar and he grows the crop and say unfortunately due to low rainfall production falls or the farmer doesn't get even the production cost. Then a small farmer comes under pressure because the moneylender forces him to return money or the loan amount raises continuously and he even cannot easily get the food and other requirements of his family at the same time ultimately, he gives up and commits suicide.

12. **INCREASING DEBT** - Its another issue of farmers that when they take loan from the bank and fails to repay the loan in proper time their debt raises which also raises their problems. This is the reason farmers demand the loan waving and the politics start from here. For example, in Madhya Pradesh (MP) in recent Assembly elections the congress manifesto promised for loan waving of the farmers which attracted a lot to the people involved in the farming sector and hence influenced their electoral behavior. This is not the case only in MP but also in many other states like Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Karnataka, etc.

But still the situation of the farmers is not good because of improper implementation of the policies of the government and also the loan waving is not the permanent cure its like bandage on the wound. What the need is the improvement in the irrigation facilities, insurance of minimum support price, mechanization of farming sector etc. But instead of this to gain the votes of the farmers only politics is done with alluring but ineffective promises and policies and the government does not strongly focus on the basic needs like minimum support price, irrigation system, mechanization, low cost availability of seeds, proper stock places for the grains etc. When the farmers put their demands in any state or at Delhi the government does not intervene in the issue seriously.

13. **PERFORMANCE OF RULING PARTY** - Parties during the election campaigns make a lot of promises and even at times they exaggerate their promises a lot but when it come to put their promises to reality they fail in the reality check test, as a result they has to face the public questions in the next elections. So, party performance based on the promises made by it and also the performance of party which were not even promised matters a lot in determining the voter's choice. During the campaigns through party manifesto every party tries to allure the public for gaining maximum votes. At many times the electorate of India have shown that the performance of ruling party determines their(people) behavior. For example, in 1977 the Indian National Congress lost the elections similarly the Janata Party in 1980. This is also known as the anti-incumbency factor which means the dissatisfaction in the public with the government. Recently the anti-incumbency factor came to picture in the assembly elections (2018) in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh where the BJP went out of power. Previously in Gujrat assembly elections, which is the center of BJP vote bank though the congress failed to win elections but the voting percentage of Congress and BJP was very close. Another example of anti-incumbency is that Congress was initially in power in majority of states but due to anti-incumbency (people's dissatisfaction) with Congress brought it out of power.

Let's try to understand it with the current government. In 2014 the BJP got a big majority, which was the one of the darkest nightmares for the Congress Party. BJP came to power with different promises regarding different issues like Black money issue, corruption, development (Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas), Hindutva, Ram-Mandir issue. They made big promises like giving 15-15 lakh rupees to Indians in their accounts by bringing all black money back, they also promised to build the Ram-Mandir in Ayodhya in their manifesto, 2 crore jobs per year, lowering the price hike, 33 percent reservation for women in central and state assemblies, appointment of Lokpal, 50 percent of profit on production cost for farmers, etc.

After the BJP came to power in 2014 with a big majority, it gradually also won many state elections and reached at its epitome by ruling alone in 19 states which was one more than the Congress under Indira Gandhi. Now what happened that the BJP failed to deliver to those who voted for her, what it had promised and currently its number of ruling states has declined to 13. Now BJP has been losing a hold over its voters like it lost the recent elections of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan and also lost the by-elections in Phoolpur and Gorakhpur of UP despite BJP being in power and more interestingly the BJP lost from the seat from where the current UP BJP CM Yogi Aditya Nath has been winning for years. They also lost by-elections parliamentary seats of Araria. Ajmer, Alwar, Amritsar, Malappuram, Srinagar etc. As per data they have won only four Lok Sabha seats out of 23 between 2014 to 2018. According to India Spend analysis of electoral data since 2014 BJP has lost 180 seats and the Congress has won 162 seats in total. The simple reason behind BJP's decline of power or vote is that the population is not happy with their performance as they
have not met the expectations of the general public and the 2019 elections are also ahead which will clearly determine whether what is the future of BJP. So, finally it could be argued that the performance is also a big determinant of voting behaviour. In the survey also, it was collected that around 70 percent of people wished to vote on the performance of the party and candidate. But again, the question is that if people want so then why the same survey says that the caste (30%) and religion (34%) are the most dominant factors to determine the electoral behaviour and the performance option comes to third rank at 28%. The answer can’t be based on a single reason, but many reasons come into picture. It includes that people don’t have the right amount education to determine fate of political parties, especially in the rural India, though there is also no scarcity of educated fools. The other reasons for such kind of electoral behavior include the work of politicians for example, their hate speeches, caste and religion-based issues and policies.

14. SUB-NATIONALISM: Ethnic pluralism, communalism, regionalism and sub-nationalism are the hard realities of Indian society. Of late sub-nationalism has become a crucial factor in influencing the voting behaviour of the people. At times a secessionist group gives a call for the boycott of elections and uses pressure tactics to forces the voters either not to vote in favour of a particular party. Some regional political parties like some fractions of the Alkali Dal, Naga Nationalist Organization, Gorkha League, Jharkha party, AASU and AAGSP in Assam have raised parochial slogans from time to time and have disturbed the emotional stability of the people of their states. Such actions of some political parties have at times influenced some people to organize themselves on narrow and parochial lines

15. MASS LITERACY: Mass literacy has been another factor of voting behaviours in India. It is because of this weakness of the people that political parties, communal groups and militant outfits, are in a position to exploit the sentiments of the people in the name of caste, religion, region and other such factor. The votes of the illiterate constitute a big proportion of the votes polled and hence it plays a big role in determining the outcomes of elections. However, despite this feature, the common sense and maturity born out of experience of the past has also been playing a big role in influence the voters mind and actions. In 1977 they united to defeat the forces authoritarianism and 1980, they again to defeat the this united non performers.

16. FACATIONALISM: The Indian Political life, from the village level to the national level, in characterized by factionalism. No political party, nor even the cadre based BJP and the two communist parties is free from factionalism. It is at work, as Rajani Kothari points out, at all level of the congress. It has adversely affected the strength of the congress is a political party with glorious past, a weak present and not a bright future. Other parties are also suffering from factionalism. The voters are getting disenchanted with some of the political parties because of their inability to overcome factionalism. They are turning to locally organized parties or regional parties which, because of their small organizational network and limited operational based are relatively less affected by factionalism.

17. PUBLIC ESTEEM OF THE CANDIDATE: A candidate report with the people with constituency or his known qualities or contribution in any value spread of activity always acts as a factor of voting behavior. Apart from his parties loyalty or opinion on various issue and problem, a voter while making his choice always takes into account the nature and level of his association with the candidate. A positive image of a party’s candidate is a source of popular support for the party. A voter prefers to vote for a candidate who is approachable and who can help him anyway.

18. ELECTION CAMPAIGNS: Each party launches a vigorous election campaign for influencing the voters in its favour. Use of such means as mass meetings, street meetings, personal contacts, posters, speech, film stars, TV and Radio broadcast, newspaper advertisement, hand bills, processions and propaganda, is made to win votes, particularly the floating votes. Election Campaign in designed to make a voter believe that his interest can be best served by the party, the candidate of the party contesting from his constituency. Poll eve campaigning plays a role in influencing the choice of the voters. A party which is in a position to create an impression through its election campaign that it has a chance to win, can earn some additional votes as several voters try to side with the side which they perceive to be a winning side.

19. CURRENT EVENTS: Each party launches a vigorous election campaign for influencing the voters in its favour. Use of such means as mass meetings, street meetings, personal contacts, posters, speech, film stars, TV and Radio broadcast, newspaper advertisement, hand bills, processions and propaganda, is made to win votes, particularly the floating votes. Election Campaign in designed to make a voter believe that his interest can be best served by the party, the candidate of the party contesting from his constituency. Poll eve campaigning plays a role in influencing the choice of the voters. A party which is in a position to create an impression through its election campaign that it has a chance to win, can earn some additional votes as several voters try to side with the side which they perceive to be a winning side.

20. LOCAL ISSUES: Local issues always influence the choice of the voters. A regional or a local party always tries to identify itself with local issues and there by secures for itself popular local support. The success of the Jharkhand Muki Morcha in Jharkhand region of Bihar is a classic example which highlights the role of local issues as determinants of voting behaviour. The spectacular success of the Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh in the 1999 Lok Sabha and Andhra Vidhan Sabha elections was largely determined by its image as a local party identified with the local interests of the state and having a good support with the centre. All regional parties try to win elections on local issues. In fact, all agencies of public opinion always act as determinants of voting behaviour.

© 2023 IJRTI | Volume 8, Issue 11 | ISSN: 2456-3315
EMOTIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING VOTER'S BEHAVIOR

- **Anger** - Generating an emotion of anger among the voters regarding a political party can help in generating votes for the other political party. This factor was clearly experienced in 16th Lok Sabha Election where the anti-incumbency factor towards INC (Indian National Congress) was so dominant that it was clearly visible in the voter's behavior. As a result BJP in its campaign, understood and channelized this anger in tapping more votes for their party.

- **Anxiety** - Voters who face anxiety during the elections vote for those candidates who manage to bring forth the effective manifesto of policies and promises. After giving a second chance in 2009to Congress led UPA to serve the nation, the voters felt agitated and anxious towards INC's lack of offering any development or even hope of doing so. Thus in 2014 Lok Sabha Election this automatically shifted the votes to the party that gave a hope along with confidence of delivering the more efficient development model to the entire country.

- **Insecurity** - According to Psychology experts, it has also been found that insecurity among voters regarding their future as well as safety and security of their life can play a pivotal role in determining their behavior. Due to various scandals, scams, incidents of social insecurity, women centric issues which were registered during the second tenure of Congress led UPA government developed the sense of insecurity among the people and thus the voting graph completely shifted towards a party that are ready to offer everything that a voter demanded.

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS:

- **PRIME MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE:** Jawahar Lal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Narendra Modi are a few prime ministerial candidates who gained maximum popularity and so succeeded in affecting the voters behavior in their favor during respective elections. During his second tenure as Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh was blamed for his failure to prevent corruption, scandals etc. Thus the most drastic change observed in 2014 Lok Sabha Election was that instead of being party - specific, the elections became person - specific. The rising popularity of Narendra Modi as a decisive leader overshadowed anti-incumbency factor related to the UPA - II Government and the result was BJP's win as the biggest single party since 1984 election and also the party achieved best-ever vote and seat share since its formation in 1980.

- **ROLE OF MEDIA:** Media plays an important role in politics as it influences public opinion and helps define and take up the issues. Media has been one of the important determinants of voting behavior since 1950s. but its role has remarkably increased during the last two Lok Sabha elections and off course during various state elections. The media was used at its best in the 16th Lok Sabha Election. On the one hand, BJP led by Narendra Modi Managed to conceptualize his political campaign through social media and immediately captured the youth of India. On the other hand Indian National Congress led by Rahul Gandhi was found to be wanting on this count. In the past or even in the present, no other political party has managed to use the social media to engage a large population of youth, a section which lacks interest in the politics of the country. Modi cleverly cultivated even social media (Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp etc.) as a propaganda tool to touch the hearts of youth.

- **SOCIAL ENGINEERING:** One more new trend has been observed during the 16th Lok Sabha election which affected the behavior of the voter to a large extent. There was a less relevant Hindu – Muslim division because huge number of young voters influenced the votes and this population does not consider sectarian impulse as a primary factor during voting. As a result BJP gained (2014 Lok Sabha election) by getting support of diverse social groups. The CSDS post election survey showed that 54% of votes from upper castes, 34% from other backward castes (OBCs), 24% of the Scheduled Casts (SCs), 38% of the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and 8% of Muslims voted for the BJP. Stressing this point, Suri and Palshikar (2014) state that BJP”s success was made possible, among other factors, due to its electoral strategy of reinventing Social Engineering.

CONCLUSION:

These are thus the important determinants of voting behavior in India. The continuity in the operation of India’s political system as a developing democratic political system is gradually training the Indian voters. The process of emergence of an issue based political struggle in place of a caste or religion or personality dominated struggle for power is very slowly but gradually taking shape. Elections occupy a prominent place in the democratic government. It is a means through which people express and enforce their political opinion and regulate political organization of the society. However the behaviour of a voter is influence by several factors such as religion, caste, community, language, money, policy or ideology, purpose of the polls, extent of franchise and the like political parties and groups make use of these variables for the sake of winning the battle of the ballot box. It is therefore, imperative that the use of these determinants should be avoided and elections should be conducted in a very free and fair manner. It also depends upon whether the system allows freedom of thought, expression and association to the people. Mere presence of an electoral system does not make a political system democratic. The will of people is expressed through voting in elections and therefore, all undemocratic and unfair means like manipulating and rigging need to be avoided in the elections. No such action is taken which would in any way undermine the popular will expressed through elections.
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