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# **FLAME THE PEOPLE: FLARE THE DEFECTION**

AUTHORED BY - UJJWAL SHUKLA<sup>1</sup> & DEVANSH MISHRA<sup>2</sup>

## **Abstract**

The political arena in Maharashtra faced significant instability in recent years<sup>3</sup>, characterized by separatism of leaders, alteration of alliances and fractured leadership in the state. The topic of the paper “Flame the people: Flare the defection” encapsulates the vaporous dynamics that have shaped the governance of the state. This paper will reflect the light on the role of political defection as a strategic toolkit in Maharashtra's political power struggle, influence of individual leaders and parties in leveraging mass support and opportunistic alliances to secure political benefit in the state. Through the recent events in state’s political arena, such as collapse of Uddhav Thakre led Shiv Sena government, emergence of Bhartiya Janata Party led coalition government and the subsequent realignment of political forces, the paper examines the role and impact of defection in policy making, governance and political identity of state. The analysis further delves into the consequences of such shifts for the electorate, democracy and the stability of state political institutions. The paper is based on secondary research methodology. The Topic of the research “Flame the people: Flare the defection” underlines the fragility of loyalty in the political arena in Maharashtra and the critical role of defections shaping the state's future political trajectory. The objective of the paper is to examine the instable political condition of the state, examining the causes of the defection in the state, analysing the role of individual leaders and political parties in facilitating the defection, evaluating the effect of defection in public trust and democratic conditions. This paper will also identify the pattern and trends of defection in Maharashtra’s political history.

Keywords: Defection, people, leadership.

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<sup>3</sup> Rangarajan R., Understanding the Tenth Schedule, The Hindu Explained (January 17, 2024), <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/understanding-the-tenth-schedule-explained/article67746169.ece>.

## Introduction

It appears that political stability may be reinstated in the state, after Devendra Fadnavis took oath as the new chief minister of Maharashtra<sup>4</sup>. Which has been absent since 2019 assembly elections. Despite the results of 2019 elections were very clear over the formation of government<sup>5</sup> but the ambition of different leaders and political parties led to an instability in the governance and also resulted in formation of new coalition government over fragile compromises. The political landscape of Maharashtra revolves around Bhartiya Janata Party, Shiv Sena, Congress and Nationalist Congress Party, but this dynamic changed drastically over the fight for the Chief minister's post. BJP and Shiv Sena were two old partners who also share identical ideology and parted their ways over the demand of cm's post after the election result. Shiv Sena had ideological differences with NCP and Congress but decided to go with them to form the government.

This move changed the political configuration in Maharashtra a new alliance formed in the Maharashtra politics which is still active and have fought the 2024 election together known as Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). The alliance is not in its original form as it was created but the alliance itself has to face some split resulting in the change of throne of Maharashtra in favour of BJP. A senior leader of Shiv Sena left the party along with 40 other MLAs and published a statement in media that they don't have any trust in the government and chief minister as the alliance in which Shiv Sena is currently in, is totally against their ideology. Further they also filed a letter in Election Commission (EC) that they are the real Shiv Sena as they have more than half of the elected members of the party, they also submitted the same in the Supreme Court and proclaimed that there should not be any sort of defection related action taken by deputy speaker in the assembly. This instability in the government comes up with instability in the party, when members of a party don't find the senior leaders of the party listening to them and not giving them time to meet such distrust takes place. This also shows lack of democracy among the parties and several measures must be taken by parties to ensure that the people's will and their vote must be respected.

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<sup>4</sup> Abhinay Deshpande, Devendra Fadnavis back as Maharashtra CM, 'to work together' with deputies Eknath Shinde, Ajit Pawar, The Hindu (December 07, 2024), <https://www.thehindu.com/elections/maharashtra-assembly/devendra-fadnavis-returns-as-maharashtra-chief-minister-for-third-term-with-shinde-and-pawar-as-deputies/article68950262.ece>.

<sup>5</sup> The Hindu Net Desk, Maharashtra results 2019, As it happened, The Hindu (Oct. 25, 2019), <https://www.thehindu.com/elections/maharashtra-assembly/maharashtra-results-2019-live-updates-bjp-buoyed-by-exit-poll-predictions/article62125669.ece>.

The same instance took place even in NCP too where Ajit Pawar nephew of Sharad Pawar defected party along with 41 MLAs and joined in the government. These instances develop distrust in the mind of people that they vote for some party and the leader and party change their loyalty which decreases the value of their vote.

### **Historical context**

The history of Maharashtra contains several instances of defections<sup>6</sup> and politicians affiliating them with other parties. For instance, Narayan Rane, who previously held the position of chief minister went to congress from shiv sena later on made his new political party and amalgamated it with BJP in 2019. Furthermore, one can also consider the case of Raj Thackrey who was once considered as the successor of shiv sena, yet diverged from the party and formed his new political party known as Maharashtra Navnirman sena.

However, the most significant political defection in the history of Maharashtra<sup>7</sup> rather in the country happened following the 2019 Maharashtra assembly elections. As previously indicated that during the 2019 assembly elections BJP and shiv sena fought together in a coalition commonly referred as NDA. Although the alliance managed to achieve the majority mark, the government was never formed over the persistent demand of cm's post for 2.5 years from shiv sena. The BJP side kept on denying it that there was no agreement over the CM's post.

The contest for the next supreme leader of Maharashtra persisted. There were various rounds of meetings among leaders across the parties, further as per the rules and norms the single largest party which was BJP at that time called for making the government by the governor. Showing their incapability the BJP stepped aside and the governor further asked the second and third largest party for the same. Government in Maharashtra could only be made in two conditions which were either shiv sena go with their old ally BJP or they go with NCP and congress combinedly who are the adversaries of shiv sena's ideology.

Later on, Shiv sena formed the government along with NCP and Congress by their side and Uddhav Thackrey became the chief minister of Maharashtra. The government lasted for nearly

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<sup>6</sup> Asim Ali, Deciphering Maharashtra's defections, its politics, The Hindu (July 15, 2023), <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/deciphering-maharashtras-defections-its-politics/article67081157.ece>.

<sup>7</sup> Surendra P Gangan, the top five defectors in Maharashtra politics who have changed multiple parties, Hindustan Times (Apr 10, 2024), <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/the-top-five-defectors-in-maharashtra-politics-who-have-changed-multiple-parties-101712763783408.html>.

2 years. Now after 2 years of government, a cabinet minister and senior shiv sena leader Eknath Shinde along with a group of MLAs went missing from the assembly they firstly moved to Surat and later on to Guwahati claiming that alliance in which shiv sena is against their ideology and thus they have no confidence in CM. To this the Uddhav faction initiated a disqualification proceeding against the dissenting MLAs, this move was subsequently contested by the Shinde group in the Supreme Court. Additionally, the Shinde faction approached the Governor of Maharashtra, submitting a letter which formally withdrew their support from the government, which was later challenged by the Uddhav group in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court's ruling over these issues is a different matter; although these events changed the political landscape. The action taken by Shinde and the 40 out of 55 MLA of Shiv sena facilitated Bhartiya Janata Party return to power, culminating in Eknath Shinde attaining the position of chief minister of Maharashtra. Subsequently, Ajit Pawar, the nephew of NCP leader Sharad Pawar, defected from his uncle's party along with 41 out of 53 MLAs subsequently, assuming the role of Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra. This overview encapsulates the recent history of political defections in Maharashtra, which has sparked a debate regarding the legitimacy of the original Shiv Sena and the authentic NCP, among other contentious issues in the political arena

### **Causes of defection**

The phenomenon of political defection in Maharashtra can be understood as a complex interplay of personal ambitious greed of leaders, power struggle, corruption, ideological shifts and regional pressures. These factors are continuously contributing in the Maharashtra defection in the form of party alienations, shifting of leaders, political instability, unexpected defections and constant changes in the government leadership and formation. There are various causes of defection which are discussed in brief below:

1. Internal instability within the political party- Internal power struggle within the political party can be seen as the cause of the defection. In Maharashtra, regional parties such as the National Congress Party (NCP) and Shiv Sena both faced internal instability<sup>8</sup> among their party. This resulted in the factionalism of both the parties, power tussle can be seen as a primary reason for factionalism. this results into the defection when party members feels that their ambitions are not getting fulfilled. Unclear and

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<sup>8</sup> Chakshu Roy, Explained: In Maharashtra drama, the key legal provision — anti-defection law, PRS research (Nov 24, 2019), <https://prsindia.org/articles-by-prs-team/explained-in-maharashtra-drama-the-key-legal-provision-%E2%80%94-anti-defection-law>.

uncontested leaderships also lead to the defection. When members of the parties fought for the leadership and they didn't get the expected results then the members of political party move in search of more favourable leadership.

2. **Opportunism and personal gain** - In Maharashtra's dynamic political landscape<sup>9</sup>, politicians often change loyalties to secure ministerial roles or gain better access to resources. A common trend is leaders defecting to the ruling party, as observed with several leaders joining the BJP during election seasons. Electoral considerations also play a significant role in these shifts, as aligning with a more powerful party is seen as enhancing the chances of winning. For instance, when Shiv Sena parted ways with the Congress-NCP alliance to form a government with the BJP, numerous leaders switched sides to align with the ruling coalition.
3. **Social and regional factors** - Maharashtra's intricate social and regional dynamics, particularly caste politics, play a significant role in influencing political defections. Leaders often switch parties to better align with their caste-based or regional constituencies or to gain an advantage in a caste-driven political landscape. Issues like the demand for Maratha reservations and other regional concerns can also trigger such shifts, as politicians may gravitate toward parties that appear more committed to addressing these demands. For instance, the Shiv Sena has traditionally championed Maratha interests, and defections may occur as leaders seek to associate themselves with a party perceived as more attuned to local priorities.
4. **Moral and ethical factors** - In Maharashtra, politicians frequently switch parties<sup>10</sup> driven by personal interests rather than adherence to a specific ideology. This lack of strong ideological commitment facilitates frequent defections. The focus is often on power dynamics rather than loyalty to principles, leading to numerous instances of cross-party movement.
5. **Media and public perception** - In the digital era, media coverage significantly influences public opinion. Political defections in Maharashtra are often driven by media narratives, the public's perception of a leader's capabilities, and the framing of their new alliances as advantageous or promising. Leaders frequently switch allegiances when the media endorses the move, presenting it as a fresh opportunity.

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<sup>9</sup> Gauri Kashyap, Maharashtra Political Crisis: Are Party Defections and Party Splits the Same, SCO (22nd Jul 2022), <https://www.scobserver.in/journal/maharashtra-political-crisis-are-party-defections-and-party-splits-the-same/>.

<sup>10</sup> Angad Chowdhary, Anti defection laws with special reference to Maharashtra, IJLS, Volume II Issue V, 2583-0538(2022).

These were the causes of defections which contributed to the defection. This state of perpetual uncertainty and unpredictability, where alliances are often temporary, continues to both political volatility and phenomenon of defection which in turns results in unstable condition of the state and insatiable government of the state too.

### **Impact of defection**

The impact of the political defection <sup>11</sup> in Maharashtra can be studied through many ways. A government impacts the people of the state, governance of the state, position of the state and many other factors. Hence, we will discuss the different impact of the defection through the different angles:

1. Erosion of democratic principles - “Government of the people, by the people, for the people”, these words of Abraham Lincoln sheds light on the basic structure of the democratic government. A democratic government directly affects the people of the state. Defections undermine the mandate of the people as leaders switch alliances for personal or political gain. frequent defections weaken the trust of the people on the democratic process and institutions. Such disillusionment makes the citizens, especially the youth, apathetic towards politics and affects political participation.
2. Political instability - defection leads to the collapse of the government of the state. Since 2019, Maharashtra has continuously faced political instability. This instability interrupts the governance of the state. Delaying crucial legislative and developmental initiatives. This political instability ultimately gives birth to the incapable government and leaders. Political instability due to defections raises the question regarding loyalty of the leaders and the responsibility of the leaders towards people of their constituencies.
3. Frequent elections - Such defections lead to losing the confidence of the legislature, this situation leads to the frequent elections. Election is a process which includes many elections personnels and additional security personnels. Defection results in burdening’s the exchequer. Defections result in switching alliances, in such a situation the government has to prove the confidence of the legislature, if none of the party is able to prove the confidence of the legislature then new elections gets conducted. This process gets repeated due to the frequent defections.

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<sup>11</sup> Abhishek Bhushan Singh, The Impact of Anti-Defection Law on the Legislatures, The Society For Constitutional Law Discussion (Dec 23, 2021), <https://www.tscltd.com/the-impact-of-anti-defection-law-on-the-legislatures>.

4. Administrative inertia - political instability due to the defections often leads to stalls in bureaucratic processes, public services and welfare programs. Defection leads to unstable governance in the state and unstable governance ultimately results in delaying public services. This directly impacts the people of the state and they suffer through various delays in welfare schemes, policies and public services. Bureaucrats, cautious of abrupt changes in power, often refrain from making decisive moves to avoid potential political repercussions. Politicians, meanwhile, prioritize political survival over governance, neglecting essential administrative responsibilities. This stagnation hampers the delivery of public services, delays infrastructure development, and disrupts policy execution, ultimately hindering overall progress.
5. Economic impact - frequent elections and shifts in governance leads to unpredictable fiscal policies, affecting state finances. Political instability also discourages domestic and foreign investment. Economic condition gets affected through the defections, it leads to negative investment climate and fiscal strain. Frequent changes in government disrupt policy stability, causing delays in implementing vital economic reforms and investment initiatives. The resulting political uncertainty discourages businesses from committing to investments, leading to a decline in both domestic and foreign capital inflows.

### **Tenth Schedule**

The genesis of anti-defections can be traced back from the 1960s-1980s<sup>12</sup>. Anti defection law was enacted through 52th constitutional amendment,1985. The anti-defection law, technically the tenth schedule of the Indian constitution was enacted to address the instability caused due to the defections in the political arena. Democratically elected legislators in India's parliamentary system shift the alliances which they supported at the time of election, this gives space to anti defection law by eliminating them from the house of legislature. There are different grounds for disqualification such as voluntarily giving up membership of the party or voting or abstaining from voting against party directives without prior permissions which is known as whip. Certain exceptions are also provided in anti-defection law. If two-third members of the party agree to merge with another party then anti definition law is not applicable<sup>13</sup>. The scope of the 10th schedule extends to both houses of parliament i.e. Lok

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<sup>12</sup> Milan Vaishnav, Democracy and defections, Volume 22, Issue 2, IJCL, Pages 400, (2024).

<sup>13</sup> Sumit Vashishtha & Dr. Bhoomanna Reddy, a critical analysis of anti-defection laws in India, Volume 9, Issue 1, IJLS, Page 70, (2023).

Sabha and Rajya Sabha. State legislatures also come under the ambit of anti-defection law which covers all the members of state legislature (MLAs). Members of parliament (MPs) are also covered under the anti-defection of law, all the members of both the houses come under the ambit of anti-defection law. Presiding officer holds the authority to decide on petitions related to disqualifications. There is a continuous controversy regarding the role of presiding officer, as the presiding officer belongs to the ruling party which somehow imparts partiality in the decision-making process. There are many case laws where anti defection laws were tested in court. In the *Kihoto Hollohon vs. Zachillhu* case, the court upheld the constitutionality of law but ruled that decisions of presiding officers are subject to judicial review. There are various challenges and criticisms about the anti-defection law. Some regard this law as the restriction on legislators on freedom of speech and dissent within the party. Delays in disqualification proceedings result in undermining the law's effectiveness. The role of presiding officer is also a point of concern as it questions the transparency in decision making process of disqualification petitions. Merger clauses under exceptions in anti-defection law are often used to evade disqualification. There are different recommendations and suggestions given by various committees. The Dinesh Goswami commission in 1990 recommended reforming the law to focus only on cases where the government's liability is at stake. Law commission and election commission of India also recommends the reforms for anti-defection laws such as shifting the decision-making power from the speaker. Hence, we can say that anti defection law helps in balancing individual freedom with party discipline.

### **Judicial Pronouncements**

*Kihoto Hollohon v. Zachilhu and ors.*<sup>14</sup> -This case was initiated through a combination of legal petitions, including the writ petitions, Special Leave Petition, transfer petition and civil petition with the motto of evaluating the constitutional validity of the 52nd amendment of 1985. This amendment demonstrated Tenth Schedule in the constitution, which is commonly signified as the Anti-defection laws, fabricated to regulate the defection of legislators from one political party to another. The 52nd amendment resulted in the modification to several articles such as: 101(3)(a), 102(2), 190(3)(a), and 191(2).

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<sup>14</sup> *Kihoto Hollohon v. Zachilhu and ors*, AIR 1992 SC 412 (1993) (per Justice L.M. Sharma, Justice M.N. Venkatchalliah, Justice Jagdish SaranVerma, Justice K. Jayachandra Reddy, Justice S.C. Agrawal; concurring) (India).

The minority opinion ruled that the amendment was unconstitutional<sup>15</sup>, asserting that it should allow the entities other than the assembly to adjudicate the matters related to defection, such as the election commission, governor or any tribunal. However, the majority opinion held that the amendment, thereby ensuring its continued enactment. In the current context, it appears that the minority opinion should be considered, advocating for the formation of a decision-making body other than the assembly to facilitate impartial actions avoiding personal bias.

*Sharad Pawar v. Ajit Pawar*<sup>16</sup> – In this case the major dispute lies over the party and its symbol. Nationalist Congress Party NCP which managed to win 53 seats in the 2019 assembly election and later on formed an alliance with Shiv Sena and Congress known as Maha Vikas Aghadi MVA. The party had to face vertical split after Sharad Pawar stepped down as the chief of the party his nephew Ajit Pawar along with 41 MLAs supported the contemporary BJP and Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde) government. Later on a case was filed by Jayant Patil, a senior party leader seeking the disqualification of Ajit Pawar and the rebel MLAs. The three judges bench further issued a notice to the Ajit Pawar faction proclaiming that the case will be heard along with disputes which are correlated such Shiv Sena case which was still pending at that time. The final judgement in this case was similar to that of Shiv Sena's one in which the Election Commission gave the party symbol clock to Ajit Pawar and Sharad Pawar faction has to be satisfied with a new one. The court also held that the decision of the speaker over defection of MLAs is subjected to his conscience and his rejection for the disqualification process of such legislators is justified.

Various political thinkers have come up with the idea that two third members of a party may defect and this will not lead to defection. Such an exempted clause makes it more complex for the parties to fight even in the Supreme Court. Further the presiding officer which is usually the speaker may act as per his/her bias which must not be the case.

*Subhash Desai v. principal secretary, governor of Maharashtra & ors*<sup>17</sup>. - This case was filed

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<sup>15</sup> Explained Desk, what is SC's 'Kihoto Hollohan' judgment, and why is it relevant in the context of the crisis in Maharashtra, The Indian Express (June 28, 2022), <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-is-sc-kihoto-hollohan-judgment-maharashtra-political-crisis-7994384/>.

<sup>16</sup> R. Sai Spandana & Joyston D'Souza, Understanding the Shiv Sena Conflict, SCO (31st Mar 2023), <https://www.scobserver.in/journal/understanding-the-shiv-sena-conflict/>.

<sup>17</sup> Subhash Desai v. Governor of Maharashtra SCC 2022, 607 SC (2023) (per Justice Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud, Justice M R Shah, Justice Krishna Murari, Justice Hima Kohli, Justice Pamidighantam Sri Narasimha; concurring) (India).

regarding the contest of disqualification process which was imposed by the deputy speaker on the Shinde MLAs. As soon as Eknath Shinde along with his group of MLAs went missing, the Thackrey group issued a notice and made them aware that the disqualification process will start, to which the Shinde group filed a petition in the Supreme Court and the court gave them a time of 12 days to reply which in normal situation is 7 days. The Shinde group also provided a letter to the Governor withdrawing their support from the existing Thackrey government and the Governor then orders for the floor test which was further challenged by the Thackrey group but the plea was rejected by the Supreme Court resulting in the resignation of Uddhav Thackrey without facing the floor test. The Supreme Court further in its judgement held that the speaker can't start the disqualification process when a resolution regarding his removal is pending<sup>18</sup>. The court further in its judgement held that the governor's act of asking Thackrey to pass the floor test was right further the court said that the election commission will be deciding the transfer of symbol and party name and thus the Shinde faction was given the political symbol bow and arrow and Uddhav faction with a torch (Mashal).

### **Solutions and recommendations**

The present political landscape is characterised by notable occurrences of defection within political parties, which is undermining the democratic stability<sup>19</sup> and leading to political crisis. The situation in Maharashtra serves as a pertinent illustration of this phenomenon, prompting political theorists and legislators to take measures to prevent similar events in future. To achieve this, it is essential to amend existing laws strictly to create a deterrent effect on the members of political parties elected to various assemblies. Prior to exploring the potential solutions to mitigate defections, it is imperative to provide a concise overview of the current defection laws outlined in the Tenth schedule of the Indian Constitution, as well as to identify the existing loopholes within these regulations.

1. **Absence of Voter Influence** – In a democratic system, voters serve as the electors for their representatives, aligning with specific ideologies that guide their voting behaviour. Consequently, it is imperative that voters possess a voice in instances where legislators choose to defect from their party affiliations.

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<sup>18</sup> Manu Sebastian, Maharashtra Speaker's Decision in Shiv Sena Disqualification Case Negates Anti-Defection Law, Contrary To Supreme Court Judgment, Live Law (11 Jan 2024), <https://www.livelaw.in/articles/maharashtra-speakers-decision-shiv-sena-disqualification-case-anti-defection-law-supreme-court-judgment-246447>.

<sup>19</sup> HM Seervai, Constitutional Law of India: A Critical Commentary, Volume 3 (4th edn, Universal Law Publishing 1996).

2. Protracted Decision-Making – The process of making decisions regarding defecting legislators is often protracted, consuming considerable time. It is essential to streamline this process to enhance efficiency.
3. Exceptions for Mergers <sup>20</sup>– The existing defection law does not apply in cases where one-third of a party's legislators choose to defect, thereby creating a loophole that facilitates defection.

The aforementioned loopholes represent fundamental deficiencies in the current legislative framework governing defections; furthermore, they encompass potential remedies that may elicit a deterrent impact on the behaviour of representatives. Several of these proposed solutions are delineated as follows –

1. Strengthening anti-defection laws – There can be various measures for strengthening the defection laws. The very first which can be done is making the decisions under defection time bound there must be a limit over delivering decisions. Secondly the lawmakers may think about transferring the power of deciding such cases <sup>21</sup>from the speaker to any specific tribunal or any such judicial body, so that there can be accountability and it will reduce the chance of any conflict of interest. Also, one major thing which has to be amended is clarifying and tightening the merger provision so that rebels can't use it as a shield for defection.
2. Ensuring electoral accountability – People hold a great position in electoral politics and thus their reaction over such defection must be noted and such mechanisms must be developed. Resignation by defecting members and re-election on such seats must be done to ensure the public mood.
3. Encouraging internal party democracy – Internal party democracy is a must which has to be in every political party, the parties are more often considered as a guarantor of democracy in the country but they lack it in their own organisation. Many parties were established and started by a single person or a group of two and they remain under that one family dominance and familism becomes an obstacle for other deserving youth leaders in the party to come up in the mainstream.
4. Re-evaluating the whip provision – Political parties issue whip to the elected members of their party to ensure that they are present and they are voting as per their direction.

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<sup>20</sup> Shanthan Reddy, 'Merger Exception to Defection – Obstacle or Facilitator?' (Law and Other Things, 21 January 2022) accessed 13 December 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Venkatesh Kumar, 'Anti-Defection Law: Welcome Reforms' (2003) 38(19) Economic & Political Weekly accessed 28 August 2023.

Parties must revisit this informal way of giving direction, they must start giving a free hand to the legislators on voting and supporting the laws as per their intellect.

There can be many more such solutions like educating the public and all but the major reform is to be done by the political party themselves. They must unite their members and give a thorough knowledge about the ideology and manifesto which the party provides and they come up to the public, to which the public decides who to vote.

### **Conclusion**

Defections in the political arena undermine the democratic principle and public trust<sup>22</sup> in elected representatives. This directly affects the participation of the public in the electoral process. Defections also lead to detrimental effects on governance, policy continuity and administrative efficiency by affecting the government in power which is responsible for good governance of the state, leaving the electorates disillusioned. Anti defection law was introduced to address such defections in politics. While there are still certain legal and ethical challenges, which needs to be acknowledged for stricter enforcement of anti-defection laws and ethical accountability to deter opportunistic behaviour. Voters' awareness can be used to deter the defections, the defected representatives should be held accountable for betraying the public mandate and the public should refrain from electing such representatives. Power stability and power struggle among political parties exacerbate instability by giving priority to power rather than public service. Leaders and representatives' defects for power and personal greed. There should be certain systematic reforms to address the loopholes in the current anti defection framework and transparent political dealing. There were long implications of persistent defections in Maharashtra and broader democratic fabric of India.

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<sup>22</sup> Vinod Kumar, Sharpen the anti-defection law, strengthen democracy, The Hindu (October 26, 2024), <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/sharpen-the-anti-defection-law-strengthen-democracy/article68796858.ece>