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SOCIO-POLITICAL TURMOIL DURING ELECTIONS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Election is a celebration of the democracy of India and gives wings to the affiliation of the universal adult franchise through Article 326 of the Constitution of India. This article aims to highlight the political instability during elections in India. The law and order of the nation faces a huge challenge to uphold the moral and essence of democracy during the festival of celebrating the freedom and rights of the citizens. The article further puts some light on the political scenario and societal changes since independence, as it is important to understand that what influences the Indian society and how the manipulations are done based on these issues. Further it contains brief discussions about the issues faced by the law and order of the nation and that affects the Indian political system like terrorism, naxalism, other kinds of violences like caste related or religion-based violence and many more. The article provides an instance on the current situation and it concludes with a brief analysis on the probable rightful solutions to the leading cause of such scenarios and what a better collaborative effort of the legislative, executive and judiciary along with media can bring to the table for combating the turmoil.

Key words: *election, law and order, political instability.*

I. INTRODUCTION

India being the largest democratic nation in the world follows a multi-party system of election that is conducted in various levels like Panchayat, Vidhan Sabha, Lok Sabha. Election Commission of India is the body which is vested with the duty to conduct elections in India. The first general election was held in 25 October 1951 to 21 February 1952.¹ Election is a way to promote the essence and moral of the democratic nature of the nation. It upholds the ideologies

¹ Yadav, S. (2024, May 3). How India pulled off its first general election. The Indian Express. Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com>

of socialism, secularism of the country as mention in the Constitution of India. Article 83 of the Constitution of India² states that the duration of the elected members of House of People or the Lok Sabha is five years so as it happens in case of both central and state level.

Even after many changes and developments over so many years the proper conduct of election still remains a gloomy path to explore as there have been multiple times that we have witnessed the criticism of the turmoil of the political surrounding during the time of election.

There have been innumerable encounters of such incidents where the sole right to vote has been hindered in such an atrocious manner that the soul of the democracy has never imagined and the law and order of the country in spite of having power and structure remained disfigured in front of such situations thus leading to failure of the system.

India has got its independence after a very long time, it is still continuing in a situation where it needs to develop, solve and evolve to sieve through its problems to seek towards a better society.

II. ELECTORAL HISTORY OF INDIA SINCE INDEPENDENCE IN TERMS OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES

The largest democracy in the world was established on 15 August 1947 when India got independent. India has two ways or systems of election as granted by the Constitution of India namely, direct system and indirect system.

a) DIRECT SYSTEM-

Direct elections are those which are conducted for the election of Lok Sabha and State Legislative assembly members where the voters vote in order to decide who will form the government.

In this system the principle of 'First-past-the-post' or FPTP is followed. This principle simply means whoever has the highest vote will win the winner of the direct election.

b) INDIRECT SYSTEM-

Indirect elections are those which are conducted for the election of Rajya Sabha, Vidhan Parishads, President and Vice President.

In this system 'Proportional Representation' principle is followed on a limited scale

² Constitution of India 1950, Article 83

which simply means the winner has to gain more than fifty percent of votes.

Article 324 of the Constitution of India³ has vested the responsibility to conduct free and fair election on an independent body known as 'Election Commission of India'. In the case of *Indira Nehru Gandhi vs Shri Raj Narain & Anr*⁴ on 7 November, 1975 it was witnessed that the Supreme Court of India reversed the judgement of the Allahabad High Court where the election of Indira Gandhi was declared to be null and void and this intervention by the judiciary into the legislation was possible as the Parliament has enacted Representation of Peoples Act, 1951 which governs the electoral process takes place in a transparent manner as to uphold the notion of free and fair election.

There are majorly three generational ideological influences that hugely rules the current Indian politics: colonialism, nationalism and democracy.⁵ These ideologies may seem antagonistic to each other but are serially connected to each other through the history of the nation's independence. Democracy came into existence of the country which was once had a dictatorship and was ruled and tortured by outsiders on its own people, due to the national interest and true nationalism which was triggered in the minds of the citizens back then due to the unbearable tortures by the Britishers which led to various other current problems in India like casteism, religious riots, and many more.

Winston Churchill once said that, if independence is granted to India, it will be lost in political scrabble⁶. This kind of mindset was similar in most of the minds of the world back then but from 1947 till now India has maintained the vision of its leaders, freedom fighters of democratic and independent India.

The need and perspective of contesting elections have changed through the years from basic needs, economic stabilization, reservation to contesting upon a shield of religion, caste and many more. Education, unemployment bracket, safety, corruption and overpopulation along with the

³ Constitution of India 1950, Article 324

⁴ *Indira Nehru Gandhi vs Shri Raj Narain & Anr*, AIR 1975 SUPREME COURT 2299, 1976 2 SCR 347

⁵ Chakraborty, B. (n.d.). Indian politics and society since independence: events, processes and ideology. Retrieved from

<https://www.hkrdb.kar.nic.in/documents/Downloads/Good%20Reads/Indian%20Politics%20and%20Society%20Since%20Independence%20-%20Bidyt%20Chakrabarty.pdf>

⁶ Indian Raj outdoing British Raj. (2012, September 13). Retrieved from <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/columns/b-s-raghavan/Indian-Raj-outdoing-British-Raj/article20501973.ece>

struggle of transforming into a developed nation from the stage of a developing nation are the current major problems in the country.

Over the years situation of religious riots, terrorism, farmers protest, strike of unemployed youth and voice against corruption are few things that leads to a turmoil situation in the nation. Through these many years all the organs of the government has collectively failed to stop this kind of situation and obstructing any kind of instability especially just before the election time.

The society did transform with liberalization, globalization and privatization leading to the change of base of the politics of India but has failed to subtract the continuance of the instability during election.

III. FOUNDATION OF POLITICAL TUMULT DURING THE TIME OF ELECTION AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY

Democracy and violence leading to instability has become a usual notion of politics. These kind of instances takes place due to rivalry between political parties, the lack of intention of the institutions to eliminate the violence due to the prima facie factor that it will affect the election in such a way that neither the present government nor the other contesting ones want and as a consequence of this, selective enforcement of rule of law.⁷

Democracy is a system where people are free to question injustice and is meant to get justice in an easy way without any kind of threats or fear. But when questioned on picking violence in order to support a particular party the common notion is that to save democracy or an answer to injustice. Contrastingly these alleged savior behaviors are not justiciable in the book of democracy and rather these are absolutely not the way how democracy should be flagged. No injustice can be mended by another injustice and this is the very ideology which the political parties try to divert the common people from and the common people especially the youth fail to understand and rather keeps on getting involved into malicious intent of the politics of today which hugely lacks ideological values intentionally and due to the fact that others are running in the same path and if they will not surely will be losing the contest.

The current political scenario has seen a lot of foundations of occurrence of violence majorly

⁷ Stewart, F. (2002). Root causes of violent conflict in developing countries Commentary: Conflict---from causes to prevention? *BMJ. British Medical Journal*, 324(7333), 342–345. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.324.7333.342>

religion or communal, casteism, terrorism, naxalism, economic inequalities.

COMMUNAL RIOTS

India is a diverse country with multiple religions and religion holds a very sensitive place for the citizens. The makers of the Constitution always had this fear in their mind that religion can become a serious concern in the future. There are multiple provisions to support and back each religion, their custom and prevent any kind of violation of religious right, which is a fundamental right. This sense of religious connection of each religious group with their followers are often malevolently used to divide the citizens in groups to fill in the vote brackets. This is achieved by manipulation and moulding the religious sentiments into hatred towards other members of different religious group and converting this hatred into votes.

CASTISM

It's a common thing in India to hear lines in speeches of politicians like, 'dalits are suffering...'; 'reservation is required...'. People are often seen posted to position based on the fact of promoting a lower caste person to a higher position to gain vote and support. Castism is something that is present in the country from time immemorial and the struggle is still continuing to eliminate this deep-rooted notion that is a big problem and are often used as a weapon by political parties. It is not surprising to say that this weapon is intentionally not destroyed due to a very favorable and easy way of gaining votes.

Often it is heard that there must be strict action against discrimination based on castes and the rule of law must be held high. But the enforceability lacks in converting that rule into an action because the actors of the act are bound by the direction of the directors who deliberately provides a narrow path to walk when it comes to enforcing that law due to a well sowed seed of castism which easily can fetch sympathy, votes and violations that will help in various promises not only in one election but series of election in various forms and levels.

TERRORISM

This is a factor that India has to deal more often than not due to the unstable relation with its neighbor in the north west region of the nation along with other funded members of different groups who claim to have their own ideologies and followings and want to create a turmoil in the nation especially during a sensitive time such as election. This helps them to portray the country in a bad frame in the international light and to divert votes according to their wish and divide the

nation based on ideological difference that has no substance at all but are hyped just to create a chain of people who are utterly persuaded to follow the hollow notions and create an inexplicable situation in the nation especially during the election.

NAXALISM

Protest of the Naxalite against the government is an age-old unsolved problem of the nation. The ideological difference is that they wanted a more powerful form of support and are against the misuse of their group identity that the political parties often do to gain support of them and other tribal groups.

Naxalites are based on different regions of the country like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana and West Bengal. Often these regions have faced a lot of armed violence leading to deaths of many naxal leaders, common people and martyred soldiers.

Naxalism has caused the growth of armed revolt, as a prolonged war of sorts, that has been going on against the state since the 1960s⁸. The history has an underlined Maoist philosophy that goes against the very concept of the democratic nation. They have a view point that it's a war against unjust government. Thus, they justify the use of extreme violence to oppose the conduct of election by all means possible. This problem remains unsolved and is a big blow to the legal system and the government.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES

Often it is seen that in case of violence during election the common people of the lower income belt die or are severely injured and are the ones who are actually fighting. And this belt is covering the largest voting bracket as India still struggles with improper income distribution and overpopulation being the fuel to this engine.

But due to mere belongingness to the lower income belt the far economically privileged ones use these people to engage in riots, making of dangerous illegal weapons and illegal activities giving it the name of political saviors of the nation.

⁸ Chawla, N. B. (2015, January 12). The Naxal challenge to electoral process. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-naxal-challenge-to-electoral-process/article6781589.ece>

These people are given bare minimum of money and a certain hollow position to have a grasp on the voters to manipulate and sometimes threat them to vote for their party and if these people are some how get caught the big cliques of the industry who otherwise were part of this would give up on them and these persuaded people suffers.

Overpopulation, lower standard of education and corruption are the driving force of the foundations of the turmoil of politics especially during election. The overpopulation leads to a large number of unemployment leading to grudge against the government and need of money to influence them to engage in these violations of the law and order of the nation. Giving fuel to the engine is corrupted people in the nation who lets the sufferer suffer more and let the rich gain more and through this gets validation by the political parties and gains in terms of money and kind.

Manipulating people or rather voters in India is easy way out by merely playing with the religious sentiments and false promises and big dialogues and this happens from a rooted problem that is education. The quality of the education has been deteriorated in such a way that pushing ideologies that are not at all important for the voters are easily done without even a raise of actual needs.

IV. ROLE OF MEDIA TO FORM AND BREAK THE FOUNDATION OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TURMOIL

The media is known as the fourth pillar of democracy which in India has a huge role to play as it is the largest democracy of the world. According to the rankings Indian media could lies beyond the hundredth position for a very long time now.

The role of media is to highlight the facts of the surroundings and portray the true happenings of the society. The role of Indian media has transformed into pushing particular ideologies of a particular party and gain the support of them to be in the best position of the business of media. This radical transformation has led the nation's media to degrade in its position where people do not consider the media as important as it should be considered.

The media has culled the ethical way of showing what is happening to what the parties want to show and promote leading to hinder the very notion of the existence of the media in the society. It was supposedly be mirroring the incidents of society instead has come to a medium of

promotion of voice of a particular party and its ideology.

Media is a medium through which the society is supposed to be educating the society how to choose the best leader for themselves but the propaganda-based notions and action of the media has contrasted from their own base of existence. It plays a significant role in forming public opinion about the political parties especially when the election nears but currently the formation of public opinion has lost its essence to pushing preplanned propaganda-based opinion to gain votes and manipulate the public that led to a rupture of conviction of the public over the media.

This type of function of media has been the reason to hoist up the flag of violence in the name of election as if it is justified to do so and that it is harming and hurting those who are in the wrong side of the path contrasting to the reality that the big brains and names who are not even touched in these violences are the ones who are responsible for such violation of rule of law and suffrage of common, innocent people. These people are purposely made to sit in the high perch that they are in but are not supposed to be because this kind of mentality cannot run a nation of such a huge population with hope, need and vision.

The media has failed to establish the fundamental essence of its emergence and has rather led to such an institution that is least trusted upon by the target audience just for mere greed of holding position that are insignificant and are rather hyped up to manipulate the media itself to do what the political parties want them to do. The clear vision of the current media is to dominantly manipulate the public but are themselves in the hanging position of manipulated puppets of the hand of the political parties and the big businessmen.

V. CONCLUSION

The current socio-political turmoil during the election in India can be easily analyzed as the use of violence and all means of vitiating the rule of law to establish a propaganda-based voters' belt to vote through a system that holds up the most democratic function that is election to gain the positions in the nation to rule the citizens of the country in which the countrymen are considered as the rulers of themselves.

To cope with this kind of situation the execution of the present laws and establishment of the rule of law needs to be done in proper way. Institutions needs to act up to properly hold the string of conception of democracy so tight that no scope is left to creep on by the offenders in the name of

politics to harm the innocent citizens of the nation or to create any nuisance in the nation.

Most importantly the mindset of people who are the ones used as instruments to manipulate the common people need to understand that what they are gaining from getting involved in violence, corruption, and more are negligible when it is compared to what and how their actions are impacting the nation. This awareness is important to be distributed among manipulated ones and the ones who are getting influenced by these tactics.

